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New Statesman

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The miners' tale

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New Statesman

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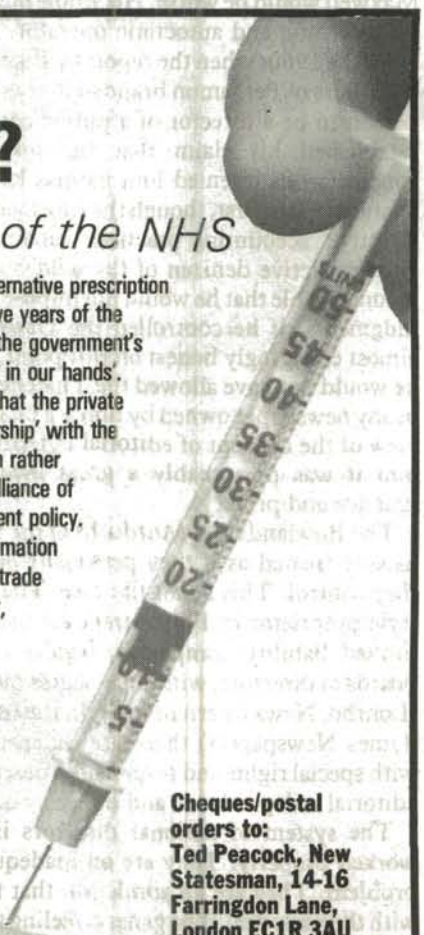

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New Statesman Vol 107 No 2771 27 April 1984

Not Maxwell

IN HIS BOOK, *Good Times, Bad Times*, Harold Evans refers to the seven dwarfs who always hover when a Fleet Street newspaper may be up for sale. It used to be a generally accepted view that most of them were not fit and proper persons to own 'serious' newspapers. They were thought not to be fit and proper either because of their other conflicting interests, or because of their personal characteristics, or both. The roll call included Rupert Murdoch, 'Tiny' Rowland, Robert Maxwell and James Goldsmith.

But times change. Murdoch now controls four Fleet Street titles and Rowland and Maxwell breakfast together to decide the fate of the *Observer*. There is circular irony in the fact that the *Observer's* editor, Donald Trelford, who is fighting for the principle of editorial independence and for his own editorial life, once played a key role in seeing off an earlier Maxwell attempt to own the *Observer*. It is a journalistic tragedy that the choice facing those who work for and those who read the *Observer* has reduced itself to Maxwell or a continuation of Lonrho.

Lonrho was bad enough. Its extensive City interests, quite as much as its involvement with governments in Africa, have prejudiced the *Observer's* independent reporting and analysis of events like the Lonrho takeover bid for the House of Fraser. But Maxwell would be worse. His whole business record shows him to be an erratic and autocratic operator. He has come a long way since the 1960s when the report by Board of Trade inspectors into the affairs of Pergamon branded him as being not a fit and proper person to be a director of a public company. (He subsequently established his claim that the inspectors in reaching this conclusion had denied him natural justice by not putting their charges to him first, though the substance of severe criticism of his 'creative' accounting practices remained valid.) He has always been an active denizen of the wilder shores of capitalism. It is inconceivable that he would not impose his own views on editorial judgments, if he controlled the *Observer*. In fact he has been almost engagingly honest on this point. His firm declaration that he would not have allowed the Thatcher-Oman articles to appear in any newspaper owned by him is a plain enough indication of his view of the concept of editorial independence and integrity. For him it was presumably a gross invasion of normal business practice and privacy.

The Rowlands and Murdochs of the world talk, behave and are usually treated as if they personally *owned* the newspapers that they control. This is not the case. The days of the Beaverbrook-style proprietor in Fleet Street are over. These newspapers are limited liability companies, legally accountable to their own boards of directors, with their shares owned by public companies (Lonrho, News International). In the case of the *Observer* (as with Times Newspapers) there are independent 'national' directors with special rights and responsibilities, particularly relating to the editorial independence and integrity of their newspapers.

The system of national directors in Fleet Street has never worked properly. They are an inadequate remedy for the basic problem. They are an admission that there is something wrong with the basic deal. The general feeling that Murdoch ought not to own *The Times*, or Lonrho the *Observer*, is assuaged by solemn and binding assurances about preserving editorial independence. The reality is that in any irretrievable breakdown of relations between owner and editor, the owner is bound to come out on top. That is the nature of property rights in our society. This is doubly so when a paper is losing money or in need of capital investment. No assurance, however solemn and binding, can force a proprietor to continue funding a paper and an editor for ever.

Equally, the attempt to defend editorial freedom and integrity in this way from 'undesirable' owners creates its own absurd proposition — namely, that editors shall be responsible to no one but themselves for what appears in their newspapers. Such total lack of 'accountability' is unacceptable, just as much for editors as for politicians, or chief police officers. In theory the problem can easily be solved. Editors should be responsible to and removable by an appropriate board, or editorial board. In practice, with the Murdochs and Maxwells, editors are hired by and negotiate their golden handshakes with the 'proprietor'.

IT IS NO WAY to run the press of an open society. There are any number of other models for how newspapers could be run. The *Guardian*, for example, is owned by a self-perpetuating trust, which disproves the common assertion that Fleet Street newspapers in the modern world require the resources of large corporations for security. Consortium ownership, as with television franchises, could equally well work and there is no reason why co-operative ventures, as with *Le Monde* in France, could not also support British national newspapers. So those who since the mid-1960s have delivered so much of the serious end of Fleet Street over to Murdoch and Rowland bear a heavy burden or responsibility for a decline in the quality and integrity of the British printed media.

The Astors, Thomson and Atlantic Richfield all demonstrated their managerial incompetence in dealing with the problems of Fleet Street and sold out. But in selling out deliberately to Rowland and Murdoch they chose to perpetuate the kind of ownership in Fleet Street that lies at the heart of the problem. Worse, the positive features of the Thomson and Atlantic Richfield ownerships in Fleet Street served to create a myth that it was satisfactory for national newspapers to be owned by international conglomerates. It is a dangerous myth, from which we are now suffering.

Meanwhile, what can the national directors of the *Observer* do in the short term? They only have one power, which is to make very clear in public what they think. They should oppose and vote against the sale of their paper to Maxwell, requiring Rowland to dismiss them if he wants to overrule their veto. If Lonrho wants to sell, the national directors should insist on a suitable arrangement, such as an independent flotation of the kind being proposed by IPC for the *Mirror*. If Lonrho continues to own the paper, the national directors should make it clear how they expect relations with the present or any subsequent editor to be conducted. Their counterparts as national directors on Times Newspapers proved to be totally supine when the similar moment came in 1980 for them to stand up and be counted. All of them thought that Murdoch was not a fit and proper owner of the papers for which they were responsible. They did precisely nothing to prevent the sale going through. When you have no real power, publicity is the only available weapon. The *Observer*'s national directors should continue to make the maximum possible use of it. □

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Shipworkers buy back jobs with redundancy cash

TYNESIDE shipworkers have been persuaded to forfeit over £6 million in redundancy payments as part of the deal when a private company bought out their employers, British Shipbuilders.

Tyne Ship Repair, the biggest ship repair yard in Britain, was taken over by two directors of British Shipbuilders (BS) in February, making the 1,180 workforce redundant. But the two, Michael Abbotts and Bill Burns, made it clear they would reinstate up to 750 of those who were prepared to forego half their redundancy payments. Only 500 came forward.

Under BS, they were entitled to redundancy agreements of three to four times the level set by law. Local shop stewards reckon that those who stayed on forfeited on average £5,000 each, although some of the long-servers lost as much as £10,000.

Director Michael Abbotts confirmed to the *New Statesmen* that the workers had lost substantial sums of money under their new terms of employment. He said it was no longer a matter for negotiation between Tyne Ship Repair and the union, but for the government as BS was a nationalised industry. 'If they get their money back from the government, then more power to their elbow. I lost out on half my redundancy too', he said.

Despite sacrificing half their redundancy money to avoid the dole queue, the workers have only been offered a 12-month verbal guarantee of work. 'I agree it was a tough choice', said Abbotts.

Under BS, the yard made a £20 million loss in the last three years. Although the first profit since nationalisation was registered in the first quarter last year, the yard was expected to make another £2 million loss this year. Now under private ownership, it is expected to make a £250,000 profit.

This will delight Mrs Thatcher and her entourage as living proof that privatisation works. But Abbotts and Burns have offered an interesting explanation for the sudden turnaround in the yard's finances. 'We can now price in a manner which meets market requirements. Before, we were subject to pressure exerted by the government on British Shipbuilders to restrict our pricing,' said Bill Burns at a recent press conference, adding that the yard can now quote at 20-30 per cent lower than before.

Abbotts told the *New Statesmen*: 'As half the shipbuilding industry is private and half nationalised, the private sector gets upset if they are undercut. So they put pressure on the government to make sure it doesn't happen.'

The biggest mystery surrounding the deal is how much Abbotts and Burns actually paid for the yard. Despite repeated questions by local reporters and a statement in the House of Commons by Jarrow MP Don Dixon, no figure has been released. When asked if it was not a matter of public concern to know for how much a nationalised industry asset was sold, a spokesperson for British Shipbuilders said it was a 'commercial secret'. Speculation on Tyneside is that the price was low or even nominal.

The other mystery is the fate of the redundancy money and the exact nature of the deal between BS and Abbotts and Burns.

Meanwhile, the firm is not only making good headway among other private ship concerns. The Ministry of Defence look set on giving it three contracts — one of them to repair the *Sir Tristram*, damaged during the Falklands War, worth £10-£15 million.

Jane Dibblin

More US bases for Britain

UNITED STATES forces in Britain have added a chain of new bases and extra satellite tracking equipment to their electronic surveillance network by expanding both their eavesdropping capacity and the links between GCHQ Cheltenham and its US counterpart, the National Security Agency.

British government information passed to the *New Statesmen* reveals that defence and British Telecom staff are now completing a £17 million extension to the National Security Agency's largest and secret overseas listening station, codenamed 'Steeplebush'. Steeplebush is in fact the American base at Menwith Hill Station, near Harrogate in Yorkshire, and was the scene of a large CND Easter demonstration and 'tap-in' last weekend. The *New Statesmen* revealed in 1981 that the surveillance base was plugged into Britain's international communications network and could monitor civilian international telephone and telex calls.

As part of the extension at Steeplebush, the British government last year constructed new communications facilities and buildings worth £7.4 million, according to US budget information and UK Ministry of Defence documents. The expansion plan includes a 50,000 square feet extension to the Menwith Hill Operations Building and new generators to provide five Megawatts of electrical power. The purpose of the new construction is to boost an 'expanded mission' of US satellite communications surveillance. It also provides a 'new (satellite) earth terminal system to support the classified systems at the site'. With another £93 million being spent on special monitoring equipment, this section of the Menwith Hill base alone will cost the United States £110 million.

The Ministry of Defence also admitted last week that a new chain of US relay stations had been built in England as a communications hotline connecting GCHQ at Cheltenham to the United States and the American communications network in Europe. The link runs between GCHQ itself and the major US Air Force communications base at Croughton, near Banbury. New relay stations have been built at Leafield and Little Rissington, west of Oxford, and at Cleeve Hill in the Cotswolds. An MoD spokesman said last week that the link provides 'transatlantic communications capacity on behalf of GCHQ, MoD and the US Department of Defense'.

Duncan Campbell

The third extract from Duncan Campbell's new book, The Unsinkable Aircraft Carrier, *is on page 10.*

Torregano-Bisson/Collectif

Sari squad go to Europe

The Sari Squad is taking the Afia Begum case to Europe. Afia Begum has now been in hiding for eighteen months as she fears deportation because her husband, whom she came to Britain to join, died before she could get here. Now the Sari Squad, a group of 50 Asian women who have been campaigning against the immigration laws, is to lobby the European Parliament on her behalf, following an eight day tour which will take in Paris, Bonn and Amsterdam. They aim to show that discrimination against immigrants is happening throughout Europe, as shown by this photo of Black people being searched following an eviction of squatters in Paris earlier this year. ■

Too many children locked up

A NEW LAW designed to make it more difficult for troublesome children in care to be locked up is having the opposite effect. A survey by the Children's Legal Centre (CLC) shows that of 182 applications to magistrates by local authorities to have children committed to secure units, 178 (98 per cent) were granted by the court.

These are the first figures to be produced on the working of the new law, an amendment to the 1980 Child Care Act, which came into force in May last year. It is supposed to have restricted the number of children being locked up by stipulating that the child must be likely to abscond from any other type of accommodation and they would be at 'physical, mental or moral risk' unless they are locked up. Rachel Hodgkin of the CLC said: 'Lock-ups should be only used in cases where there is a serious

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risk to the child. Yet, we've heard of a 10-year-old who was locked up because he kept on truanting and several other cases where secure units were being used as dumping grounds'.

In another case, a girl whom the local authority wanted to send to a secure unit, ended up being successfully fostered because her barrister fought the case. The barrister told the *New Statesman*: 'The local authority just couldn't think of anything better to do with her. It even admitted that locking her up wouldn't do any good and that it wasn't in her interests but, as she kept running away, the social workers simply didn't know what to do.' The girl had been rejected by her parents and, when a foster home was found, she settled in readily.

However, lawyers rarely fight these cases vigorously because the legal aid fees are small and the cases are frequently extremely time-consuming.

There are 379 places in secure units for children (the minimum age is 10) in England and Wales and the cost of running them is astronomical — about £750 per week for each child. 'I'm not complaining about the quality of care — it's just that children shouldn't have to lose their freedom because nobody can think of what to do with them and their lawyers fail to represent them properly,' said Ms Hodgkin.

Christian Wolmar

Is racism really illegal?

'DADDY, what did you do during the great coloured invasion?' asks a recent British National Party leaflet. With the local elections coming up, you may well get similar offensive literature plopping through your letter box from the National Front or the British National Party. But what can you do about it?

It may seem obvious that such leaflets are designed to incite racial hatred and are thus illegal under the 1976 Race Relations Act. Not so; in fact it is almost impossible to get the authors of such racist statements prosecuted, let alone convicted. According to the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), this is leading to an increase in racist literature and a consequent increase in racial violence.

The problem stems from the 1936 Public Order Act. Section 5A of that Act was incorporated into the 1976 Race Relations Act, making incitement to racial hatred a criminal offence. To obtain a conviction the prosecution has to show that:

- the defendant published words which are threatening, abusive or insulting; and *in addition* that
- the circumstances were such that racial hatred was likely to be stirred up against a racial group.

Establishing both requirements is difficult: there were just 30 prosecutions in the four years to 26 March 1984, with 22 convictions. But in the seven cases since the beginning of 1983 there have been five acquittals. Of 50 complaints made by the CRE last year, only one resulted in a prosecution.

The law is full of loopholes, too. In one case, the defence successfully argued that since a magazine was aimed at people who already hated blacks and Jews, they were unlikely to change their minds by reading the magazine and therefore there was no *incitement* to cause racial hatred.

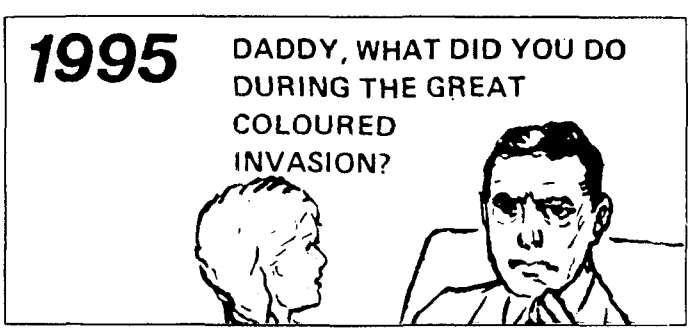
In another case, the jury accepted the defence submission that a publication was so grossly racist it would be more likely to engender sympathy, rather than hatred, towards ethnic groups. Getting a case to court can also present almost insurmountable obstacles. Any prosecution, whether private or instigated by the police, requires the specific consent of the Attorney General.

According to the Attorney General's office, this 'safeguard' was built in because the Act 'encroaches' on the basic freedom of speech and therefore 'a fine balance must be struck between that freedom and the public interest'.

The Board of Deputies of British Jews closely monitors the working of the Act. Its Director, Dr Jacob Gewirtz, believes the prosecution and conviction rate is so lamentable as to make complaints to the Attorney General almost pointless. 'All the prosecutions so far have been in cases so extreme that they would have been illegal as breaches of the peace,' he said.

Both the CRE and the Board of Deputies have made submissions to a government review of the Public Order Act, begun in 1979. But there is no sign of its findings. As Francis Deutsch of the CRE points out: 'With this government — and a certain faction of Tory MPs who have links with racist parties — I do not think any amendment to the act is likely.'

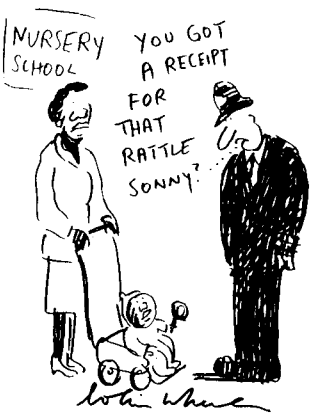
Kent Barker



MISCELLANY

Police Four

Don't give any pocket money to your four-year-old or you may find they're in trouble with the law. Four black children aged between four and six were found to have 'money on them which they shouldn't have' by their headmistress Ms May, at St Paul's school in Tottenham. She immediately called the police in, without even talking to their parents. The parents were summonsed to the next day's assembly which was addressed by one PC Almay who, according to the *Caribbean Times*,



spoke to the children in a 'very serious manner'. Anyone for Babies Against Police Repression?

Clive's private number

The annual report of the certification officer — the government's lethargic watchdog for trade unions and employers' federations — notes rather coyly that there are 'major problems' with the 1982 accounts of 'three larger unions'. This column is prepared to name names. They are NALGO, UCATT and ASTMS. The three have had their accounts qualified every year since the certification office was set up in 1976. The local government officers' union, NALGO, is in dispute with its auditors, Clark Whitehill, who want to charge an extra £12,000 audit fee to visit and check the books of about a dozen branches. The union feels that its finance staff do the job perfectly well. The construction workers' problem is that they don't include all their branch funds in their accounts — for many years UCATT didn't include *any* branch funds, but now the certification officer feels 'some progress is being made'. The biggest problem of all is ASTMS, Clive Jenkins' white collar union. Because of 'computerisation', it has been unable to give the number of members, or the number of subscribers to its political fund (£75,000 in the red at the end of 1982), since 1980. Last year ASTMS affiliated to the Trades Union Congress on the basis of 410,000 members, amid dark mutterings from rival unions that this was 'nowhere near' the true figure.

Prize day

The Queen's Awards to industry included the usual accolades for arms manufacturers. Four of the 23 technology awards went to defence companies, including two to Racal Electronics. And nine of the 88 awards for export achievement went to weapons companies, including Marconi and Plessey. The exports covered by the awards include Marconi's S247 radar system, sold to South Africa in defiance of the UN arms embargo.

Economic donation

Another year passes for National Westminster, the bank that gave Mrs Thatcher her governor of the Bank of England, Robin Leigh-Pemberton. Another set of accounts, another £400 million profit, another £9,200 donation to the Economic League. The directors say in their report that, while the donation is 'not made for political purposes, it might be held to come within the definition of such payments in section 19 of the Companies Act 1967'. It certainly might. The Economic League keeps comprehensive and secret records on trade union activists and other left wingers, for the use of employers. The latest issue of the League's 'apolitical' newsletter warns employers against CND, 'influenced by Communists and their allies', organising in trade unions.

Official Report

Could there be a secret feminist printworker in the Militant Tendency's Hackney headquarters? A Militant pamphlet called 'Liverpool Fights the Tories' quotes the famous rallying cry issued by Terry Fields in his first speech in the House of Commons: 'A militant is only a moderate who has got up off his or her knees.' An unlikely formulation for a leading figure in an organisation well known for its view that the women's movement is a distraction from the working class struggle. This is confirmed by checking *Hansard* for last June. Apart from thanking the Deputy Speaker for allowing him to make his 'maiden' speech, there is no 'her' anywhere in Terry Fields' long debut.

Published and damned

Another attempt to cash in on the current boom in feminist books is the latest specialist catalogue from Allen and Unwin, 'Women's Studies 1984'. Among the 22 books listed is 'The Subversive Family' by that well-known feminist, Ferdinand Mount. No doubt the publishers will soon be announcing, as a new contribution to feminist thought, the collected speeches of Margaret Thatcher, to whom Mount was until December political adviser.

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Miners — a major vote-swinger?

THE MINERS' STRIKE could be a crucial factor in the 'mini general election' on 3 May, when district council elections coincide with three parliamentary by-elections.

Most of the 4,000 council seats up for election were last contested in 1980, when Labour was leading the Conservatives by 5 per cent in the opinion polls. Gallup last week put Labour 4½ points behind — the pundits blame Arthur Scargill — so Labour will be hard pressed to maintain its position.

Labour control of Stirling, Worcester and Cambridge, held in each case by a casting vote, is vulnerable. Stirling and Worcester would become Tory-controlled, while Cambridge would go 'hung'. The Tories need to gain two seats in both Blackburn and Hyndburn to win control from Labour. The only reasonably certain Labour gain is Birmingham, where the seats were last contested in 1982 at the height of the Falklands War.

But if Labour can shake off the alleged stigma of the miners' strike, it can gain control in up to eight councils, while the Tories could lose 12 (see table). Scope for gains is restricted by the fact that, except in Scotland, only one third of seats are up for election. In Tamworth, for example, Labour needs to gain just two seats to take control, but only one Tory seat is up for election.

These elections are the last chance for the Social Democrats to break into local government. Because the SDP didn't exist in 1980, it is only defending 30 seats (mostly gained by defections) and is certain to make net gains. But weak organisation and a poor showing in the opinion polls guarantee that the advance will not be on the scale of the 100 or so seats gained in both 1982 and 1983. In several places, the SDP has infuriated local Liberals by being unable to field candidates. In Gosport, for example, the Alliance partners each agreed to contest half the 10 seats, but the SDP could only field one candidate.

These local disputes, together with the fact that the Liberals are fielding 300 more candidates than the SDP, will stiffen Liberal resistance to SDP demands for parity in the allocation of seats in future. But the Liberals are unlikely to perform spectacularly themselves. With the Alliance trailing badly in the polls, they will have to fight to retain control in Adur, West Sussex, let alone take places like NE Fife and Eastbourne from the Tories. And in Liverpool, technically a Labour marginal, the Liberals have already conceded that Labour will not be threatened. In Liverpool 1980 was an exceptional year for the Liberals, and they admit that Labour is likely to gain at least six seats, giving the 'confrontational' Labour group a defection-proof majority.

And in Scotland, Labour already dominates local politics, and could strengthen its grip by taking control of Edinburgh for the first time.

In Scotland, the elections are all held every four years, and in 1980 Labour ended up in control of all but eight of the 33 councils contested by political parties. Since then, because of by-elections and defections, the party has lost control of Dumbarton and Inverclyde, both the scene of bitter political wrangles.

In Inverclyde, a row between the Liberals and the Social Democrats has resulted in two seats being contested by both parties, reducing the Liberal administration's chances of fending off Labour's challenge. In Dumbarton, three senior Labour councillors, having failed to win re-selection by their local parties, are standing as Independents against official Labour candidates.

The other parties have had their share of damaging internal problems, with a Tory candidate in Dundee, Ian Bunce, having to withdraw at the last minute because of his former links with the National Front.

The SNP is still suffering from the repercussions of its recent schism, and total unity has even eluded the fringe parties: the 42 ecologists (25 of them in Edinburgh) are split between the plain Ecology Party and the Scottish Ecology Party, while the 32 communists divide into at least two camps.

For political activists it is sobering to realise that about 230 candidates have been elected unopposed, including over 100 of the Independents who have long dominated the Highlands, the Borders and Dumfries and Galloway, and at least 58 Labour councillors around the country. Political apathy is so great in three Highland wards that not a single candidate of any description has come forward to represent the people.

John Rentoul and Rob Edwards

●Seventeen councils where change of control is likely, in order of 'winnability'. First figure is number of seats for Labour to win (or the Tories to lose); second figure is number of seats the Tories are defending (Inverclyde includes those where Liberals and SDP both standing); figure in brackets is the year when seats were last contested.

Tory to Lab		
Birmingham	4/21	(82)
Chorley	2/10	(80)
Southampton	2/8	(80)
Hung to Lab		
Grimsby	1/5	(80)
Inverclyde	1/4	(80)
Bristol	5/14	(83)
Crewe & Nantwich	3/9	(80)
Peterborough	2/5	(80)
Tory to hung		
Brighton	1/8	(83)
Eastleigh	1/9	(80)
Wirral	2/12	(80)
Stockport	2/11	(80)
Gloucester	1/5	(80)
Hertsmere	2/8	(80)
Congleton	2/7	(80)
Dudley	6/14	(82)
Cheltenham	4/7	(83)

Peace protests roll call (2)

Here is the second in our series on arrests of peace protestors. Following the request for information published with the first list (NS, 30 March) details of arrests have flooded in, for which we are grateful, but to keep us up to date, readers are asked to send in any more details they know personally to Janey Hulme, Peace protests, c/o New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. Details of London and Scotland arrests have been held over until next month.

The figure in bold represents the number of arrests and the figure in brackets the total to date at that place listed here or previously.

Upper Heyford USAF base **12**(1,012)
17.3.84. A further 12 (approx) arrests for obstruction & criminal damage.

High Wycombe RAF base **10**(193)
26.3.84. 8 arrested. Charged with criminal damage. Hearing 16 April at which 3 did not attend — adjourned until July.
Of the 113 arrested 19 Dec at Dawshill Peace Camp, 1 pleaded not guilty and 112 ordered to pay £10 and £10 costs if waged. All refusing to pay. Hearings for non-payment in May.
2 men who climbed the crane at the Naphill bunker arrested — hearing also adjourned until May.
2 men arrested Christmas Common nr Naphill for occupation of a US communications aerial. The men were released and told there would be no charges. Four weeks later, obstruction charges were brought against them. Hearing in May.

Bude (correction) **10**
24.2.84. 10 women arrested at Morwenstowe GCHQ base. Charged with behaviour likely to cause breach of peace — to date no summonses have been received.

Brighton **1**(12)
1 other person arrested outside Arms Fair at Metropole Hotel Brighton in May 1983. Charged with obstruction.

Leeds **7**(24)
21.6.83. 7 Walk for Life members arrested during Buddhist Meditation. 3 bound over and 4 found guilty of obstruction. Absolute discharges.

Little Rissington USAF Hospital **7**(14)
14.4.84. 7 arrested for entering hospital grounds to photograph beds and supplies for US soldiers. Held but later released. No charge.

Waterlooville **7**
7 arrested, 9.3.84 for protest against Marconi Underwater Systems factory development at Brambles Farm, Waterlooville. Charge breach of the peace. Hearing 16.3.84. 3 bound over in the sum of £50-100 for 12 months. 2 under age of 21 were told to accept a bind over or leave the court. 2 refused to plead. Fined £40 and £20 compensation (for writing over existing NF graffiti in cell) and £15 costs each. On refusal to pay, both got 30 days in Winchester prison.

Brambles Farm Peace Camp, Winchester Prison **9**
Police violently arrested 9 persons outside prison including 2 passers-by who were only asking for PCs' numbers and reasons for the arrests. Over 20 official complaints have been made by previously uninvolved persons who saw the incident. 8 people have so far been summoned.

Burtonwood USAF base **9**
9.12.83. 8 people arrested on base blockade. Hearing 31.12.84. All bound over to keep the peace and each fined £50. Original charge of obstruction changed to obstruction of police 4 days before hearing. A ninth person was arrested at the same demo because he was recognised by a policeman as being one of the NGA pickets who had been ordered to stay out of the Warrington area until after a court case set for one week after the demo. He was remanded in custody for a week pending trial concerning the NGA picket.

Capenhurst Uranium Enrichment Plant, Cheshire **32**
22.2.83. 6 women arrested. Charged with wilful obstruction of police. Sentence 4 cond. discharge & £15 costs. 2 cond. discharge & £20 costs.
20.9.83. 7 women arrested and charged with obstruction of highway. All fined £25.
25.3.84. 19 women arrested. 10 charged on two counts. i) criminal damage to two perimeter fences to the value of £1,500, ii) criminal damage to a partially constructed building. 9 charged with i) above, plus either obstruction or 'turbulent behaviour against the person of Her Majesty'. Option of Crown Court hearing and possibility of individuals being charged with conspiracy as CID are making extensive local inquiries. Hearing at Chester Mag Court on 14 May.

RAF Cottiesmore **8**(13)
16.12.83. 1 man arrested charged with breach of peace and obstruction of police. Held on remand at Leicester jail for 6 days before being released.
2.2.84. 7 arrests. 4 for obstruction of police and breach of peace (later dropped). Two people refused to give their names and were held in Leicester jail for 3 days. All given cond. discharge and ordered to pay court costs. 3 £20 and 1 £40. 1 charged obstruction and criminal damage. 2 arrested for stealing a car (their own vehicle). Released without charge.

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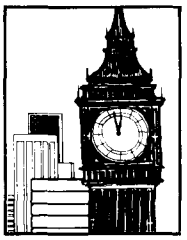

PETER KELLNER Political Editor

Tinker, tailor, soldier, sailor . . . but what if you're a woman?

WE TAKE editorial independence seriously at the *New Statesman*. Only the other month I tried to persuade the Complex of the virtues of a weekend competition I had thought up. I used every trick I could think of ('I know Hugh Stephenson *personally*'; 'The SDP members of the board are *very* keen on the idea'). It was no good. The Complex's receptionist would not let me through. He sent me straight back to mine more paragraphs at the wordface.

Last weekend I was reminded of that humiliating episode as I sat in the sun idly perusing, as one does, a newly-published 557-page volume of statistics from the census office.* My suggestion had been to provide readers with a piece of prose full of sexist words (manhandle, one-upmanship, statesman, bitch, cocky etc) and award prizes for the most accurate and elegant translations into androgynous prose. Many more sexist words appear in the census volume, which analyses in great detail the jobs we do. Its categories include cameramen, draughtsmen, postmen, salesmen, roundsmen, policemen, groundsmen, ambulancemen, foremen, fishermen, craftsmen, furnacemen, sewermen, bargemen, lightermen and boatmen.

When you look a little closer at the figures you can see why such labels survive. Almost all the jobs in those categories are done by men. There are 80 foremen for each forewoman, 70 fishermen for each fisherwoman, 20 furnacemen for each furnacewoman and nine postmen for each postwoman. The suffix '-men' may be undesirable, but it is not usually inaccurate.

The census figures record how slowly women are gaining equality of opportunity. The decade between the last two censuses, from 1971 to 1981, saw more activity and better legislation designed to secure equal rights at work than ever before. So far, however, the results have been negligible. At the edges, distinctions between 'male' and 'female' jobs have become a little softer, but the ghettoes remain largely intact.

Overall, the numbers of women at work increased between 1971 and 1981 by 460,000 while the number of men at work decreased by 1.2 million. (The 1981 census was conducted when total unemployment stood at 2.5 million: it is higher than that now, but most of the rise since the Conservatives returned to office had already taken place, so it is unlikely that many of the figures reported here have changed substantially in the past three years.)

The census divides jobs into 15 occupational 'orders' (e.g. 'managerial', 'selling', 'painting, repetitive assembling, packaging etc') and then subdivides them into 161 occupational 'groups' (e.g. 'welfare workers', 'welders', 'general labourers'). This division into what people do, as opposed to which industry employs them, gives a far clearer picture of differences between men and women at work than we obtain from more regular statistical series. It is more important to know how many women are employed as managers and how many as secretaries than how many work in manufacturing and how many in services.

Women were already in 1971 in a majority in three of the occupational orders: clerical; selling; and catering, cleaning and other personal services. In each case ghettoisation has increased. For example, there has been a slight overall increase in the number of clerical jobs — up 3 per cent over the decade to 3.55 million. But this conceals a decline of 16 per cent in the number of men with clerical jobs and an increase of 11 per cent in the number of women.

There are 'women's' jobs where the proportion of women has been falling. Their common characteristic is that they are occupations where overall numbers have fallen sharply. What has happened is that women's jobs have disappeared faster than men's jobs. Thus there were 45 per cent fewer male textile workers in 1981 than in 1971 — but 55 per cent fewer female textile workers. And while 21 per cent fewer men do repetitive assembly line jobs, 37 per cent of women's assembly line jobs have gone.

WHY HAVE such differences occurred? The census records, but does not explain. From the pattern of the data, the single most important reason would appear to be that women are ruthlessly and systematically penalised for being marginal members of the workforce. That is, they take the lion's share of new low-paid jobs in many occupations where opportunities are growing, but lose out disproportionately when work contracts. One major consequence is that structural economic change affects women more than it affects men. And, insofar as women are less well paid than men and less well unionised, social and political reaction to structural change is muffled. Men in the City and in company boardrooms make the decisions; but women largely bear the brunt.

That is by no means a universal rule, as opposition to steelwork and coal pit closures has shown. Both steel working and coal mining are overwhelmingly male occupations. Indeed, coal mining is the only substantial occupation in which the 1981 census does not record a single woman. Other bastions of male exclusivity such as steel workers, postal supervisors and forestry workers have fallen during the previous decade. The point about the 1980 steel dispute and the present coal strike is that they involve historically cohesive and well unionised — and male — groups of workers. Industries which in total employ many more people, but in smaller, more dispersed and less well organised groups — many of them mainly women — have destroyed jobs with scarcely a protest.

One curious and certainly unintended result of this process is a distortion by the media. Insofar as the tribulations of economic change are presented in terms of industrial conflict, it is bound to be portrayed as male unions in conflict with male managements. The more routine reality of upheaval in women's work is less obviously 'news'.

What is occasionally news is a woman breaking into a man's world — becoming a stockbroker, winning the Irish Grand National, even (God help us) becoming Prime Minister. And, in absolute terms, the census data shows some sharp increases in the numbers of women employed in the top jobs — there were five times as many women lawyers in 1981 as in 1971, three times as many architects and town planners, twice as many economists and statisticians. But in each case, at least 80 per cent of the jobs are still held by men. In the case of architects and town planners the figure is 96 per cent.

Altogether, only 1.1 per cent of women at work have jobs in social class 1 — professional jobs according to the Registrar General's classification. This is almost double the 1971 figure of 0.6 per cent, but still well below the male figures of 4.6 per cent in 1971 and 6.0 per cent in 1981.

According to Heather Joshi of the Centre for Population Studies, the failure of women to get to the top is linked to their tendency at the other end of the scale to work in women's job ghettoes: 'The obstacles still remain in what schools, employers, husbands and women themselves expect to achieve in the sphere of paid work. What these tables omit to report explicitly is the unpaid caring that preempts much of women's time and energy.'

Some information can be inferred. Only 2 per cent of men are classified as part-time workers, compared with 39 per cent of women workers. And two thirds of women part-timers appear in just seven job groups: cleaners, shop assistants, clerks, domestic and school helpers, secretaries, nurses and counter-hands. As Joshi says: 'With a few exceptions these are low-paid and low status jobs which few men would want to do'. Which is dandy if you are a right-winger untroubled by the hardship, inequality and sheer economic inefficiency of it all but ought to give us on the Left pause for thought. □

Census 1981: Economic Activity, Great Britain, HMSO, £17.70.

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MINERS' STRIKE

Last stand at the Alamo

For some miners, the present strike is a long war of attrition; for some, a complex cat-and-mouse game with the police; while for others it is an imposition by a 'political' leadership. Chris Burkham talks to colliers in Yorkshire and Notts.

AT CORTONWOOD colliery, where this miners' strike began, there is little sign of the 'fifth column of political activists', all 'hand-picked men, who have Communist, Marxist or Trotskyist backgrounds' whom the *Daily Express* last week alleged were running the strike. In the Strike Control Centre an unknown hand has penned a notice: 'BEWARE! A vulture is going round the estates of Brampton offering a few quid for watches, bracelets, rings, etc.' And next to it, in a bolder hand: 'Beware. A vulture is going round the coalfields offering a few quid for your jobs.' Other 'fifth-columnist' material offers advice on how to get rent and rates 'frozen' and on where meat parcels are available (1 lb mince, 1 lb frying steak, 1 lb sausages and 1 lb liver for £2.50). It was Cortonwood which sparked the present dispute — when, two days after they had been told the pit had another five years' life and three weeks after 80 colliers had been transferred there, the NCB announced that it must close.

'We're not militants, we don't strike for the sake of it', explains Mick Carter, Cortonwood's NUM representative, 'we're fighting for our bloody existence.' It was formerly a 'moderate' pit which didn't vote for the left-wing area leadership. Now these Yorkshire colliers, who still dissociate themselves from 'political campaigning', are behind the policies of Arthur Scargill and support them with flying pickets and the intent to continue for 'seven years, if necessary'. Across the county border, one Nottinghamshire miner describes the same Scargill as 'a deceitful little bastard'.

For the men at Cortonwood who without the strike would already be out of their jobs, the deceit is in the action that suddenly ended five years' employment, mining the accessible and high-quality seam of silkstone coal. Nineteen other collieries are marked for closure this year. They trust Scargill to secure them a safer future, not Westminster.

With no solution in sight, one of Mick Carter's flying pickets is still firmly holding his ground: 'MacGregor wants our jobs and Maggie wants our union cards — they're having neither.' Further south this attitude is endorsed by two Derbyshire strikers, although without the same resolve. Already one is taking note of his wife's urging him to return to work and bring in the wage packet. In place of fiery resource, they have a stoicism towards the events overtaking them, splitting their time between long walks and picket duty.

For them, mining has no heroism. It is just a job and if there is work for them to do, it will be done. Theirs is the silent presence which follows where others lead and whose barely concealed envy for the hefty wage packets available in Nottinghamshire has constantly threatened further splits in the strikers' ranks.

A group of Notts miners militantly defended their passivity: 'In Nottinghamshire the pickets have met a hell of a lot of resistance, because we've turned round and said, "Sod you, we'll have an area ballot." So 78 per cent of our members said they'll work and they're not stopping us because we believe in democracy. *We* had a democratic ballot, and if *they* want to strike they can.'

AT CORTONWOOD, the pickets have made their stand in a frontier-style lean-to shack, named 'The Alamo'. From there, they greet such answers with snorts of derision. 'Some of them can't see what's going on, they think they're safe because their directors have told them that there will be no closures in the Nottingham coalfield this year. They haven't been told about what will happen *next* year. All they're thinking about is next week's pay packet. Well I'm afraid I can't think about next week's pay packet because I haven't got one.'

There is an air of semi-permanency to 'The Alamo': battered easy-chairs form a half circle around a brazier with a blackened kettle boiling up water; in the shelter there is an electric light bulb, copies of the *Daily Mirror* and *Reveille*, various eating utensils and a loaf of Mothers' Pride for the chip butties at lunch-time. A group of miners, from one who can only have recently finished his apprenticeship to one who has already retired, pass the time, as they guard a deserted pit, with jokes about the supreme bogey-man, MacGregor. One has a photocopy of a poem from 'Anon — A miner's wife' which describes him as 'a decrepit Yankee pensioner' and concludes: 'The Sheriff of Nottingham can't help him now because we'll be back for more/We will show this foreigner just how we won the war'.

'Our wives are 100 per cent behind us. If my

Police activities

SINCE the strike began on 12 March substantial evidence has emerged of police action that appears to take place outside basic democratic principles.

Police brutality has been alleged on several occasions, particularly at Thoresby colliery: during the first week pickets were kicked after being knocked to the ground; on 21 March three Welsh miners said they were roped to railings for three hours; on 22 March police used crowbars to smash car windscreens. Pickets similarly condemned police 'tough tactics' at Haymarket coal depot on 22 March, and at Blyth power station on 3 April. In the fifth week truncheons were drawn against pickets at Cresswell.

Restriction of movement has become a daily experience for flying pickets since the second week of the strike when Yorkshire miners were turned back from Lancashire along the M62 and Kent miners were prevented from proceeding to Nottinghamshire at the Dartford tunnel.

Phone tapping of union activists is taken for granted in major industrial disputes. At a Leeds rally on 27 March Davy Miller, Yorkshire Area executive member from Kellingley, accused police of tapping his phone. In South Wales a coach proprietor was asked by the police to reveal the destination of pickets 10 minutes after the union had phoned through their booking on 6 April. Aware of this problem, strike centres communicate as little as possible by telephone, use previously agreed codes and have laid false trails.

Intelligence work against the miners extends beyond phone tapping. On 27 March nineteen Kellingley miners were questioned at Mansfield police station about their political beliefs. Plainclothes officers have been discovered impersonating pickets to gain information: Frank Slater, South Yorkshire official, was tailed by one on 22 March. They infiltrated miners lobbying the Nottinghamshire delegates meeting in Mansfield on 6 April, and were among pickets at Thoresby during the fifth week of the strike. On 9 April David Owen, Chief Constable of North Wales, admitted using plainclothes officers at Point of Ayr colliery, and on 10 April Leon Brittan defended such tactics.

Snatch squads were depicted on television in action at the Doncaster NCB headquarters, where they arrested 12 people on 27 March. On 9 April about 4,000 pickets succeeded in getting to Babbington colliery, but were infiltrated by police officers wearing NCB donkey jackets, adorned with Yorkshire Area 'stop pit closures' stickers. At 11.30 am the police infiltrators marked picket leaders with yellow and black stickers one of which was removed by a miner from Glasshoughton from his back. Snatch squads arrested 60 people that day, many of whom had become 'marked material'. Later the infiltrators acted as *agents provocateurs* and began throwing stones; when one was challenged he said he came from 'a Doncaster pit', but was unable to name one.

'Operation Policewatch' was launched on 6 April to monitor police activity during the miners' strike. Telephone Sheffield 615388 for details of local Policewatch groups in your area.

Jonathan Winterton

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Steve Pyke

Boosting coal consumption at the Alamo

wife saw me crossing a picket line she'd leave me.' Brampton already has an unemployment figure of 25 per cent in an area where the only industry is coal mining — 'it's not a beautiful place, it's a colliery village.' And the support of the village is still strong, drawn from the whole community. As well as the cut-price foodstuffs, all but five of 130 local businessmen have signed a petition backing them.

Survival on £11.75 a week for a 21-year-old man who already has a wife and two children is not easy, and even less so when compared to the 'dirty money' available to the strike-breakers. Miners still at work can earn £70-£80 a day in bonus alone. On top of that they get their wages, so it can be £110-£120 every day. More salt in the wounds of men who are held back from the strike-breakers by police, who may well be collecting bonus pay of £200 each week.

They may welcome the police presence, which helps them take away that hefty pay packet; but the strike-breakers also suffer the consequences. 'I have to carry my locker key around with me to prove I live in my home village' said one Notts miner. 'I appreciate what they're doing, they're protecting our right to work. Then again, when you're stopped every 20-30 yards along a public footpath and asked where you're going, what you're doing, and who you're doing it with and why . . .'

Police and pickets are engaged in a continual cat-and-mouse game, starved of information about each other's tactics. One morning the pickets at Bolsover all returned to their cars and left the colliery entrance only to drive round in a wide circle, arriving back at their starting point once their foes had moved elsewhere to head them off. The next day Mick Carter despatched pickets south, who were all stopped before they left Yorkshire and threatened with arrest if they are even seen in Nottinghamshire again. On another day, police arrested pickets who were being driven to court, preventing them from appearing.

Such incidents make good stories — but they are not the rule. 'All you read in the media is biased, totally biased. Take this morning: I went to work at 5 o'clock and there were two men at the pit, two pickets from Yorkshire, who didn't threaten me at all. They just explained their situation to me and that they had the backing of their national union, which they did. So I said I believed in what there were doing and turned back. It's just the papers which are stirring it.' The week before, this same miner had ducked bricks and bottles to get to work, defiant because of the intimidation.

UNDERNEATH the plastic sheeting of 'The Alamo's roof the miners say the current situation is only serving to consolidate the gap between rich and poor, 'masters and slaves, upstairs and downstairs and in my lady's bloody chamber'. Strengthening their resolve to maintain the strike until they are victorious is the belief that the government is manoeuvering itself into a position where it can use the dispute to destroy the power of the NUM — and through that destroy the power of trade unions.

'I'm getting letters from all over the country, all trade unions, all walks of life who say, "If you don't win this one then what chance have we got?" Because the GCHQ has had far greater connotations than what people might think, the reverberations that went through the trade unions from that are still rumbling. As far as I'm concerned, if we lose this then every trade unionist — and I should imagine that you're trade unionists, and if not you can bugger off now — might as well tear their card up. It won't be worth anything.'

There is little common ground on what democracy means. Where the Nottingham miners harp on about the democracy of their decision to continue working, Mick Carter sees that: 'Every newspaper in the country, every television station is all telling us we should have a ballot. But did anybody ballot MacGregor into his job? Did anybody ballot Maggie Thatcher into hers? Did they tell the men (sic) at GCHQ that they could have a ballot? *We* have already balloted with our feet.'

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So rather than go into voluminous detail, Mobil will use this column – and those to follow – to talk briefly about oil in general, our company in particular, and the things we do with the money we earn.

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WHOSE SOVEREIGNTY?

Camera Press

Cruise: dual control or duel for control?

*Despite Mrs Thatcher's assertions, the British and US governments differ fundamentally on who has the final right to press the button, reveals Duncan Campbell in the last of three extracts from his book.**

AT THE HEART of the whole history of US bases in Britain is the issue of British sovereignty. It is most seriously abrogated in the 'understanding' — or lack of it — about the 'emergency' use of US bases in Britain. This is 'a matter for joint decision' — a form of words capable of highly elastic meaning.

In the cruise missile debate, the demand for a British right of veto — which is what dual control must mean — has become a prominent political issue. But even before the issue was promoted by the SDP late in 1982, opinion polls consistently found that only a few per cent of the population were content to leave the control of cruise missiles in US hands.

No one disputes that, as matters stand, the only document which grants Britain any rights in the matter is the 1952 Churchill-Truman communiqué. The communiqué is the sole document governing the use of American bases in Britain in emergency; no British or American official or politician has ever suggested that any supporting memorandum of understanding or other clarifying or implementing document exists. It stands alone.

It is, however, far from tightly drafted; according to US officials concerned:

> — It is not 'final and binding'.
> — It is not an 'agreement in the international political sense'.
> — Failure to reach an agreed joint decision 'would be construed in favour of the United States'.
> — It is heavily qualified by the phrase 'in the light of the circumstances prevailing at the time'.

The communiqué is therefore *not* an agreement; it merely 'reaffirms' an 'understanding'. What it means, therefore, is what both sides think that 'understanding' means. In practice, since they are American weapons and American bases, what matters is what Americans think it means.

Mrs Thatcher has claimed that the document confers dual control and a right of veto on the United Kingdom. She is wrong to say this; indeed, she is probably more aware of the inadequacies of the understanding than any Prime Minister since Harold Macmillan.

She is wrong because, in the first place, such an interpretation runs counter to the obvious logic of the situation, historically, militarily, technically and politically. Secondly, no United States official has ever supported her view that Britain has an unqualified veto. Even if these officials were unreasonably quarrelling with Mrs Thatcher, which they are not, it would not matter. If they do not believe that the understanding embodies 'dual control' and a British right of veto, then what the British Prime Minister thinks does not matter a whit. Britain has no available, effective means of physical restraint on US actions.

What has actually happened in crisis? In December 1950, Prime Minister Attlee visited President Truman, concerned about possible US use of atomic bombs in Korea. The issue was the potential use of the atomic bomb anywhere, not specifically from bases in England. But Attlee did not get the agreement he sought.

The US policy continued to be 'no veto', but the special relationship required consultation. At the end of their meeting on 7 December 1950, Truman told Attlee that:

> he would not consider the use of the bomb without consulting the United Kingdom. The Prime Minister asked whether this agreement should be put in writing, and the President replied no, that it would not be in writing, that if a man's word wasn't any good it wasn't made any better by writing it down. The Prime Minister expressed his thanks.

Dean Acheson, the US Secretary of State, was quite clear that while consultation might be in order, it would only be allowable if time was available. The US was willing to talk about consultation, he wrote in 1971, but not prior agreement (the *sine qua non* of a 'veto'):

> To require the agreement of the British before this [the atom bomb] would be used was a silly thing to do because it might have to be used at once.

In his own words, Acheson 'unachieved' the near agreement that Attlee had obtained from Truman on the issue.

The present-day understanding was first drafted by the British Ambassador in Washington, Oliver Franks, in October 1951. His draft subsequently formed the basis of the critical 9 January 1952 communiqué, agreed by Churchill and Truman after a meeting on board the Presidential yacht *Williamsburg*.

> Under arrangements made for the common defence, the United States has the use of certain bases in the United Kingdom.
>
> We reaffirm the understanding [this referred to the Attlee-Truman discussion, although Attlee and Truman had in fact focused on wider issues] that the use of these bases in an emergency would be a matter for joint decision by His Majesty's Government and the United States Government in the light of the circumstances prevailing at the time.

The communiqué is described as a reaffirmation of an earlier understanding, and the continued acceptance of that understanding is apparently reaffirmed by successive heads of government as Defence Secretary Michael Heseltine explained in May 1983:

> That agreement is ratified and reaffirmed every time a British Prime Minister or the President of the United States changes, and each of them personally examines the agreement and reaffirms their satisfaction with it. [All Prime Ministers have] reaffirmed this agreement. . . The agreement has existed since 1951 [*sic*]. It exists now, tonight. . .

Heseltine also stated on the same occasion that the understanding had been subsequently construed by both parties to apply to US 'weapons' — such as Polaris or Poseidon submarines and cruise missiles — as well as bases. 'The reaffirmation does mention bases and weapons. . . The Prime Minister had made that quite clear', he said. This is the only known modification to the (agreed) implied terms of the understanding.

The 'agreement' on the use of the bases is therefore just an 'understanding', albeit given an undue solemnity by a process of repeated reaffirmation. What did the original parties to the understanding think they had negotiated, and what was its status?

Luke Battle, who was at the time the special assistant to Secretary of State Acheson, explained the US negotiating position at length to BBC reporter David Henshaw in 1983, in the BBC current affairs series, *Brass Tacks*. Did it provide Britain with a veto, or 'dual control', the former State Department official was asked.

> No, absolutely not. It meant in each, every instance that everybody wanted to be in full consultation, in full harmony with the other. But veto. . . no.

**The Unsinkable Aircraft Carrier*, Michael Joseph, £6.95 pb.

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- that the Government's proposal would reduce democratic control over London's public services
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And your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray."

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Stop the Government taking away your right to vote. Collect as many signatures as you can and send this petition to GLC Campaign Office (Room 82) or ILEA Campaign Unit (Room 59), Freepost, County Hall, London SE1 7PB before May 18th (no stamp required). **SAY NO TO NO SAY.**

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Nor did the then British Ambassador who attended the talks, Roger Makins (now Lord Sherfield), think that Churchill had agreed a veto. The United States would not grant a veto on its use of nuclear bases. But the special relationship with Britain, and, later on, the ties of the NATO alliance, did imply and require that, if circumstances permitted, the United States should consult its allies about proposed military actions.

But how do two sides in a consultative discussion reach a 'joint decision', if they do not agree? Eugene Zuckert, the US Air Force Assistant Secretary who represented the USAF in the negotiations, says that:

> A 'joint decision' would mean that a one-one tie would be construed in favour of the Americans. It was not a veto. I couldn't imagine that we would think there was a veto on our actions. I just don't believe that, as part of our own concepts of sovereignty, we could concede [a veto on the use of US forces] to another.

THE FORMULA of the 1952 communiqué has often been repeated in Britain, but seldom — until recently — in the United States. The statement was always intended primarily for a domestic British audience. No US President, Secretary of State or of Defense has ever said that it contained a veto. Many have said the opposite. Dean Acheson pointed out in 1950 to President Truman that:

> No commitment of any sort to anyone limited his duty and power under the law to authorise the use of the atomic weapon if he believed it necessary in the defence of the country.

Robert McNamara, who was Secretary of Defense for Presidents Kennedy and Johnson for seven years, said in 1983 that he did not think Britain had a veto in American eyes.

As the row over 'dual control' grew in 1982 and 1983, Mrs Thatcher and Defence Secretary Michael Heseltine stuck resolutely to the position that the existing agreement was entirely satisfactory. But in the spring of 1983, Mrs Thatcher — evidently embarrassed by the growing unhappiness in the Conservative Party — did attempt, secretly and unsuccessfully, to get something better from the Americans.

At first, Mrs Thatcher tried to move the United States' public position by direct action; she asserted, unilaterally, that the agreement was indeed 'joint control', knowing that on this occasion US officials would not dare to correct the Prime Minister. In a February 1983 press conference, following a meeting with Italian Prime Minister Fanfani, she explained exuberantly:

> The arrangements we have made for the new missiles are the same as those of long ago between Mr Churchill and Mr Truman. They are arrangements for joint decision — not merely joint consultation — but joint decision. I am satisified that those arrangements would be effective. A joint decision on the use of the bases or the missiles would of course be dual control.

'Got it?', she asked her questioner, 'Good! Excellent! Worth asking the question!'.

Soon after this, however, it became clear that Mrs Thatcher was trying to alter the substance of the UK-US understanding to conform with what she had previously said. British diplomats in Washington met with Pentagon officials from March to May 1983, in an attempt to negotiate a new deal. By the time of the planned Western summit meeting in Williamsburg, Virginia, she wanted to get the United States on the record with, according to the *New York Times:*

> An 'absolutely unambiguous' statement, pledging that the missiles would never be used without British consent, or [the addition of] a clause to that effect to the 1952 agreement.

United States Assistant Defense Secretary Richard Perle confirmed at the time that negotiations with Britain were taking place. But he did not think that it was 'necessary to change existing procedures governing US weapons systems stationed in Britain'.

Mrs Thatcher repeated her claim about dual control in Parliament two weeks before the summit, asserting that the existing agreement:

> [means] that no nuclear weapon would be fired or launched from British territory without the agreement of the Prime Minister. That is categorical.

But the sovereignty that Attlee had lost and could not recover, that Churchill and Macmillan had failed to retake, Mrs Thatcher could not and did not restore. □

NORTHERN IRELAND

Forum deals

Mary Holland on the long-delayed New Ireland Forum report

ALL OVER Ireland last weekend people gathered in the brilliant Bank Holiday sunshine to commemorate the Easter Rising of 1916. It is the most hallowed date in the Irish political calendar, and is fast becoming the most embarrassing. It honours a group of fanatical, violent men and women who, against hopeless odds, took up arms to end British rule in Ireland.

Since the beginning of the present troubles in the North, and particularly since the emergence of the Provisional IRA, considerable intellectual effort has been expended in Ireland on rewriting the history of 1916. Most Irish historians of the revisionist school are concerned with proving that a distinction can be drawn between the leaders of the Easter Rising and the Provisional IRA. One way of doing this has been to suggest that although there was no popular support for the rebellion of 1916 it was, unlike the Provisional's acts, legitimised retrospectively in the general election of 1918, when the Irish people as a whole voted overwhelmingly for Sinn Fein candidates. Yet perhaps, after all, history will repeat itself.

Last Sunday, at the Republican plot in Belfast's Milltown cemetery, the speaker told an enthusiastic audience that with 'support growing for the armed and political struggle in the North, it will not be long before Maggie Thatcher's Government is begging to negotiate with Republican leaders to end British rule in Ireland.' For once Danny Morrison, who is Sinn Fein's candidate in Northern Ireland for the European parliament election, evoked quite accurately the dilemma which will face the British government if his party overtakes John Hume's SDLP, to become the majority representatives of the Catholic community.

Few people believe, yet, that Mr Morrison will defeat Mr Hume to win the one seat which should fall naturally to a nationalist representative under the North's PR system. But almost everybody expects him to erode the SDLP vote, paving the way for Sinn Fein's real drive in the local government elections next year.

It is to avert the crisis which such a victory would provoke in Ireland as a whole, that the leaders of the political parties in the Republic, together with John Hume himself, will meet next week to publish, finally, the report of the New Ireland Forum.

THE LAST few weeks of the Forum's deliberations have constituted something of a political cliffhanger. The publication of the report has been repeatedly delayed because of difficulties in finding a formula acceptable to all participants. This has caused considerable embarrassment at home and abroad, because it has focused attention not on the Forum's work but on its failure to reach agreement.

The difficulties arise from a fundamental political difference between Mr Haughey and the rest. As far as the governing Fine Gael and Labour parties and the SDLP are concerned, a major objective of the Forum is to come up with something which the British government can welcome, however cautiously. With this aim, they — Fine Gael, Labour and the SDLP — stress that the report itself is not intended as a negotiating document. Rather it is to be a statement of principles which could provide a basis for future discussions between London and Dublin. At the very least, it should demonstrate that the Irish body politic has considered seriously the actual problems presented by the Northern situation and has consequently shifted its ground.

Much emphasis is therefore being laid on a section of the report which will lay out the 'realities' of Northern Ireland and detail the

THIS ENGLAND

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□ Jobless Stan Howard, 54, who applied for work as a clerk, was turned down because he put a 12½p stamp on the envelope. The Peterborough firm discarded second class application letters because they showed lack of enthusiasm. — *Basildon Evening Echo* (David Ealey)

□ Sir, At conferences, particularly those involving many clergymen, I have occasionally taken to wearing my name badge, not only on the left lapel, but also upside down, so that, in the bemusement so often caused by such events, I can easily remind myself who I am. — Letter from The Rev. Eric Thacker in *The Times* (Margaret Lintott)

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prerequisites for any lasting political solution. The report almost certainly will conclude that the lasting aspiration of constitutional Irish nationalists is a united Ireland, but will suggest that this may be realised through other forms than the unitary state — for example some kind of federal arrangement or joint administration of the North by Britain and Ireland.

These qualifications have been unacceptable to Mr Haughey, or at least to the more nationalist elements in Fianna Fail. His argument is not without political force and goes as follows: if the point of the Forum is to redefine the case for Irish nationalism in the light of the problems presented by the North today, it would be quite wrong to weaken that case in the hope of getting some short-term response from Britain. The time to talk about new political structures, is when all parties to the Northern conflict sit down at a conference table to negotiate a settlement, not before. Moreover, Mr Haughey continues, if all the constitutional parties are seen to abandon the claim to a united Ireland that will leave the Provisionals as the sole guardians of a long-cherished national aspiration to unity. Thus he has been refusing to accept any draft which does not assert that a unitary state is the aim.

However, Mr Haughey does recognise that an agreed report from the Forum is necessary to help the credibility of the SDLP in the North and to halt the onward march of Sinn Fein. For this reason, an elaborate process of horsetrading has been taking place in recent weeks to agree a draft report acceptable to Fianna Fail, and that can be claimed as an historic breakthrough by John Hume as well as giving Dr FitzGerald something which can be despatched in the general direction of the British government and public opinion.

To accommodate these disparate objectives the report now seems almost certain to contain some or all of the following ingredients. It will be scathing in its criticism of British failures in Northern Ireland (Fianna Fail's and the SDLP's point) but will stop short of calling for immediate British withdrawal. It will restate the traditional claim to a united Ireland and argue that the best way of achieving this is through a unitary state with constitutional guarantees for Protestants (Fianna Fail). However, it will allow that other options should be considered, including joint administration of Northern Ireland (Fine Gael and SDLP).

This, it is hoped, will be enough to allow the British government to say that it is examining the report with interest and looks forward to further discussions etc. etc. The Northern Ireland Office view is that as long as the report concedes that a united Ireland can only be achieved with the consent of the Unionist majority, such a response should not present too much difficulty. But in the end the decision lies with Mrs Thatcher herself. She has yet to decide whether to put Northern Ireland on the British political agenda and the much publicised delays of the Forum in publishing its report probably haven't helped. Against this the real presssures which now weigh on her must be those enunciated by Danny Morrison in Belfast last weekend. If she refuses to recognise the moderate arguments of constitutional Irish nationalists now, she may be forced to treat with the political leadership of the IRA later. □

BUSINESS

Tiny minds selling out

Charles Raw on the battle to control the *Observer*

TO ANYONE watching closely, the signs that Tiny Rowland was spoiling for a row at the *Observer* have been around for some time. The build-up of tension goes back to 4 March when the city columns of the *Sunday Telegraph*, edited by Ivan Fallon — soon to take up the job of deputy editor of the *Sunday Times* — reported that Rowland had cut the pay of the independent directors. The following week Fallon followed up with this amazing suggestion: 'Having cut the fees of the five government approved directors of the *Observer* from £5,000 to £1,000, will Tiny Rowland now remove them altogether? The government, I'm told, would not be as disapproving as one might imagine.'

Now whether or not you agree with Fallon's views — his apparent approval of Rowland's attitude to independent directors does not bode well for what is left of editorial independence at the *Sunday Times* — you can be sure that on the subject of Lonrho his reports are authoritative. (Except that £5,000 should have been £4,000.)

The independent directors of the *Observer* decided at the time to give in to this attack on their status. As one told the *Guardian*: 'We are very anxious not to jeopardise the future of the paper and therefore our hurt pride is taking second place at the moment to the stability of the paper.' Nevertheless, given that the independent directors have now shown that they are made of sterner stuff, it was a curious decision. Indeed the manner of the pay cut itself seems to have been in breach of the Articles of Association of the *Observer*, specially drawn up to protect editorial independence. The remuneration of the directors should be determined either by the company's general meeting or by a resolution of the directors sanctioned by the principal shareholders.

No such meeting, according to the *Observer* management, took place. A technicality, it may be said, as Rowland could have forced a pay cut at either such meeting. Still, as was discovered at Times Newspapers, breaches of the rules that start out as technicalities pave the way for more serious infringements.

But why should Rowland have wanted to provoke the directors? In retrospect, now that they have backed Trelford to the hilt in accusing Rowland of improper interference, it would seem to have been a mad gesture — especially as it was Rowland who suggested their appointment in the first place. Fallon suggested that Rowland's anger stemmed from the fact that none of them had tried to curb the *Observer*'s campaign on Thatcher and the Oman contract, a campaign which could be applied to much accepted business practice. Support for this idea came last week when Paul Spicer, a Lonrho director, implied that the Oman campaign also lay behind his description of the *Observer* as 'a monster out of control'. Furthermore Robert Maxwell, who desperately wants to buy the *Observer*, has stated that he would have stopped the *Observer*'s coverage of the Oman contract while praising editor Trelford for the Zimbabwe story.

But the Oman issue, having been taken up by Peter Shore, was hardly one on which Rowland could have had an overt showdown especially as Lonrho employees now appear to have supplied some information to the *Observer*. Trelford's Zimbabwe report no doubt at first sight seemed a better proposition.

Trelford made the same sort of tactical mistake as Harold Evans at *The Times*: he accepted the help and advice of his proprietor in setting up the trip. Rowland is a man who expects extraordinary loyalty and who harbours a deep resentment against anyone he feels has broken his word to him.

BUT WHAT ABOUT Rowland's own promises? Here he seems more forgetful. Rowland shifted his attack from the suggestion that it endangered Lonrho's large commercial interests in Zimbabwe to an attack on Trelford on the grounds that journalistic incompetence threatened Lonrho's investment in the *Observer*. Perhaps Rowland looked up the Monopolies Commission Report which approved the *Observer* takeover: asked if there was not a risk that Lonrho might sometimes have to choose between 'bridling' the *Observer* or endangering his business interests in parts of Africa, Rowland 'assured us on behalf of Lonrho that it would not impose any limits on the *Observer* "whatever the cost"'.

With undertakings like that on the record, Rowland could not oust Trelford on the grounds that something he had published endangered Lonrho's other commercial interests. Hence the attack on the commercial performance of the *Observer*. While that performance may not have been startling, it hardly provides grounds for dismissal. Last year, disregarding redundancy payments, the *Observer* showed a very small profit. Furthermore, with the flotation of Reuters, Lonrho, like Murdoch, is about to reap a windfall paper gain unforeseen at the time of takeover. Lonrho paid £3,000,000 cash for the *Observer* and has probably since put up another £2 million or so. Against that, the Reuters stake is worth £6-8 million.

Indeed one of the attractions of Rowland's option of selling the *Observer* is that the price would reflect this value: in fact, selling the *Observer* would be the only way that the windfall could be quickly realised. But as the knowledgeable Fallon reported last Sunday, Rowland is not 'a natural seller — in fact, he hates even to sell an old car (his garage is full of his old Rolls Royces).'

More to the point, to sell the *Observer* would look like defeat and Rowland hates to accept defeat as his tenacious years of battle for control of Harrod's showed. Journalists and independent directors at the *Observer*, must gear themselves up for a long hard battle in which Rowland's chief weapon will be the control he can exercise over the paper's finances. □

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DIARY

Have Gadafy and Bettaney come to the aid of the government, just as Galtieri did two years ago? Their ludicrous and even deadly nuttiness provides a splendid justification for the same behaviour in the Cabinet. The siege of Libya's so-called People's Bureau is being handled by a special Cabinet Committee with the name of COBRA. This is James Bond mentality. It was disquieting enough to learn that secret Cabinet committees are formed whose membership is unknown even to the rest of the Cabinet, when this was first revealed in the *New Statesman* in July 1978. But the public announcement of a committee termed COBRA is even more terrifying. I suppose that the special 'War Cabinet' now monitoring the miners' strike is codenamed KING KONG. Meanwhile the real significance of the Bettaney case is that the authorities have a further justification for their assaults on those like Sarah Tisdall who think for themselves rather than freak out.

○

As for Michael Bettaney's politics, the mind boggles. He was not 'turned' by the Russians, as has been suggested; he couldn't even get them to take him seriously. Did the Kremlin show good sense? To what political tendency did Bettaney belong? He was hardly CP, he could not have been a Trotskyist. And he concluded his public statement:

> As my last political act, I call on comrades everywhere to renew their determination and redouble their efforts in pursuit of a victory which is historically inevitable.

Why redouble your efforts to gain something that is inevitable? It took a Tory MP in a letter to *The Times* to question whether it was so crude as to be a 'spoof'. Sir Anthony Grant asked if the affair was not a double bluff and demanded a public explanation. Does this mean that Bettaney's superiors were indeed trying to set him up as a double agent, that *they* taught him the codswallop about 'inevitable victory' to impress the Russians, and that the poor lad then went and believed it all instead? The current exposé of MI5's activities in the *Guardian* makes this a plausible explanation. But what the paper did not reveal is that all the moles and agents who penetrate the unions, the peace movement and the revolutionary groups belong to their own secret para-party. For the first time I can reveal its name: *The Anglo-Irish Marxist Leninist Socialist Sect (MI5)*, known in the game as AIMLESS-MI5. They are the best paid revos in the land. The real significance of the Bettaney case, then, could be that it reveals near panic on the part of VIPER, the directing bureau of AIMLESS-MI5, that a covert tendency, known only by hearsay as ULTRA-AIMLESS, has grown to near break-away proportions. Will AIMLESS split?

○

Two months ago in this diary I claimed that the USA was conducting an 'undeclared war' against Nicaragua rather than giving the *contras* covert support. At last Senator Barry Goldwater has seen his way to agree with me. He has learnt that the mining of Nicaragua's harbours has been done by some of the CIA's very own 'Latino assets'. (Don't shake your head, with a Cabinet COBRA Committee already in session it will not be long before UK officials talk in similar jargon.) In a personal letter to CIA director William Casey, Goldwater has declared himself to be 'pissed off'. 'Bill', he wrote, ' this is an act violating international law. It is an act of war. For the life of me I don't see how we are going to explain it.' Now how is it that for weeks on end I knew something Goldwater didn't? Is it because the *New Statesman* has a fully repaired satellite observing the world's frontier incidents? Some things are plain obvious. Often this is why they need to be said. On another frontier, for example, the CIA gets away with it completely. Armed Pol Pot troops are deployed in Thailand with Western as well as Chinese support. When Reagan arrives in Peking, he and Deng can joke about their joint possession of 'Khmer Rouge assets', even though — US Senate please note — genocide is against international law.

○

Great Truisms of World Leaders: I think I'm going to put this series on ice now that The Boss, in her recent *Panorama* interview, has achieved her ideological apotheosis: 'I go for agreement, agreement with the things I want to do'.

But we should try to spell out the consequences. In Wandsworth, for example, a pioneer of privatisation, the Finance Department of the Borough Council, has just stopped paying the giro fee when council tenants pay rents by giro. So from now on it will cost tenants 35p if they want to pay their rent through their local Post Office. The alternative for many is a 40p bus ride. For pensioners with a London Transport pass this will only cost two waits in all weather, but who cares? It is a great saving. Those whom it gratuitously harms, who need the 35p, are too pathetic to count. I think we might keep an eye out for this sort of petty wickedness of life under Thatcherism. If you have any examples please send them to 'Islander' at the *New Statesman*, marked **'Britain Under The Boss'.**

○

I have been trying to read the first volume of Arthur Bryant's history of Britain, *Set in a Silver Sea*. Condensed in part from his earlier, multi-volume history of England 'for boys' (sic), it has been likened to the works of Macaulay and even Gibbon. Actually it stands in the tradition of Esmé Wingfield Stratford and Winston Churchill, colourful splotches on a uniform background of purple patriotism. It is Falklands history really, a perspective that endorses Bishop Stubbs who believed that there are times when wars are 'the true history of a people, for they are the discipline of the national experience'. Bryant proclaims that he has written his book for 'the younger generations of a new classless society'; he seeks to relate the singular greatness of 'our' past and the moral story of our 'continuing nationhood'. The whole is sugar-coated in revolting hypocrisy, with England as an island of Christian virtues, its imperialism guided by 'fair play'. The image of the 'silver sea' suggests wisdom and light but also, less consciously, oceans of profits. Similarly the book's jacket design, specially chosen by the author, guilelessly displays his pre-Freudian mentality as his favourite cathedral spire rises from the breaking waves.

Islander

ROGER WODDIS

Sunday shopping

'It is not very pleasant sitting on a supermarket shelf waiting to be picked up.' — Desmond Balmer, father of the National Union of Journalists chapel at the Observer.

It isn't very pleasant for a person,
Or any institution, come to that,
To learn he is a packet of detergent
Or something fit for feeding to the cat.

The plaintive cry of anguish from the chapel
Will not disturb the masters with the most,
Who settle mighty matters over breakfast
And swallow independence with their toast.

As Tiny Rowland said to Robert Maxwell,
'It's up to you if Trelford keeps his job;
Such editors today are two a penny —
Now, how about a decent offer, Bob?'

While public duty, principles and honour
Are jolly fine traditions in their way,
The customers and those who make the product
Can surely not expect to have their say.

From all the pressures bearing down on *Pravda*
The journalists of Britain are immune;
We guard our precious freedom in the knowledge
That he who buys the paper calls the tune.

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Camera Press

FOREIGN NEWS: LIBYA

The price of paranoia

Purges, assassination, a ministerial re-shuffle and, above all, Gadafy's paranoid fear of dissidents form the backdrop to the London siege, reports Claudia Wright

Washington

AT THE homes of the key men in Libya are pale blue telephones. They are direct lines to colonel Muammar Gadafy. Since January, these lines have been humming with an internal debate over how forcefully to respond to the Libyan dissident movements that are based in Egypt, the Sudan and Europe. Before the London shooting, it appeared that those who argued for tough measures had won Gadafy's ear. But those who said that a new anti-dissident campaign could cause more trouble than it was worth would now be justified in telling Gadafy 'we told you so'. In February, however, a number of these men lost their jobs — and their blue telephones.

The tension that erupted in London on 17 April has been building slowly since last year. In several respects it resembles the events of 1979-80. At that time, there were demonstrations by Libyan university students in Benghazi and Tripoli and a plot against Gadafy among military personnel based at Tobruk. The student demonstrators had little connection with the outside; the military plotters had links to French, American and Egyptian intelligence.

In reply, Gadafy launched an effort to 'revolutionise' the universities by setting up new indoctrination committees and military training for male and female students. There was some support for a programme of 'discipline' for the students, especially among the traditional older generation, which shared Gadafy's distaste for the consumer culture to which their children were drawn. But Gadafy's measures aggravated the situation, and led to an unprecedented degree of repression inside Libya and against the Libyan exile communities in Western Europe.

This provoked an upheaval within the Libyan Foreign Ministry, where there had been opposition to terror tactics abroad. Six Libyan diplomatic representatives resigned their foreign posts and refused to return home. In Tripoli there was a bureaucratic tug-of-war for control of the ministry itself, which the then minister, Ali Abdassalem Treiki, lost. Gadafy initiated a purge of his embassies, replacing them with 'people's committees' headed by men in whom he had confidence. The campaign of repression abroad resulted in nine murders and the rupture of diplomatic relations with several countries.

By 1981, the terror was largely finished, but the incoming Reagan Administration found it useful to play up the Libyan threat, close the Libyan embassy in Washington and impose an embargo on oil imports from Libya and on most categories of US exports to Libya. Reagan did Gadafy a considerable, though unintended favour. Rather than inflating the threat of a dissident movement, Gadafy could point to the US Sixth Fleet in the Gulf of Sirte, the covert operations of the CIA and the pressures of US diplomacy as conspiring against him.

This helped divert Libyan student opinion from domestic grievances and prepared the general population for economic sacrifices which might have been more disagreeable had they been imposed as a consequence of falling oil revenues, or a mere austerity drive. Libyan economic planners had been arguing for years in favour of oil production cuts and expenditure controls, but Gadafy had always refused the advice. By the end of 1981 he had no choice but to accept, and Washington obliged by providing him with the excuse to make a revolutionary virtue out of economic necessity.

By the end of 1983, it might have seemed that the Libyans had seen the worst of their

(Above) Guarding Gadafy, just in case

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economic crisis. Gadafy, moreover, was not only able to claim that he had survived the worst the Reagan Administration had devised to overthrow him, but also that he had outpointed the Administration on almost all of its Middle Eastern initiatives. For example, Gadafy had backed the alliance of the Druze and the Lebanese and Palestinian Left against the Israeli-Phalangist alliance in Lebanon. He was Syria's ally against Jordan and he recouped his losses in Chad.

From the Libyan perspective, Gadafy had emerged on the winning side in the Middle East, even improving his relations with the Gulf Arabs whose emirs he has often abused and against whom he had aligned himself in the Iraq-Iran war. He also managed to restore diplomatic and economic relations with his arch-enemy, King Hassan of Morocco, to balance his worsening relations with Algeria. In Morocco, Tunisia and the Sudan — in fact everywhere in the Arab and African world where Libya plays a role — Gadafy's adversaries were either dead or dying, retreating politically or militarily from domestic opponents, or speeding towards bankruptcy. In the short-term tactical game Gadafy plays, he had every reason to be satisfied with his position on the board.

In the longer term, Libya's trade figures indicate that at the end of 1983 total imports had fallen below the $1,100 million earned by oil exports, putting the trade balance into the black once again. The haemorrhage of reserves, which had fallen from over $12,000 million in 1981 to an estimated $6,900 million in 1983, was about to stop. European firms exporting to Libya also began to experience shorter delays in getting paid. So long as no large new arms purchases were contemplated, the Libyan economy appeared ready to expand, and with the US out of competition for the Libyan market, trade with Western Europe was bound to grow. If all went as expected, Britain, which provides 70 per cent of the consultancy services for Libya's development projects, could look forward to an increase of exports to Libya beyond the 1983 level of £274 million (in 1981 it had been nearly twice that amount).

WHY THEN the internal upheaval in the Libyan cabinet in February? And why the tension with the dissidents that produced the London shooting?

There are still a number of enthusiasts in the CIA's operations' directorate who believe that, with their help, the Libyan dissidents can topple Gadafy. But the general consensus now is that this is eyewash. Gadafy is in practice safe from assassination by an externally directed plot; and the Libyan dissidents will never amount to anything. One reason for this is that the dissidents, particularly those living in Britain, come from the small, old, urban bourgeoisie, whose fortunes were tied to the corrupt Senoussi monarchy. They have no support in the new middle class that has developed under Gadafy since the 1969 revolution. No matter how politically alienated the new class may be — Libyan surveys confirm this — it is not about to throw in its lot with the *ancien régime*.

Groups like the National Front for the Salvation of Libya are regarded by US intelligence as, at best, a minor nuisance for Gadafy. They are financed to broadcast into Libya and their leaders are regularly available in Cairo and Khartoum for interviews with the Western press. From London they produce newsletters. No one pays them much attention and, according to an uncorroborated report last month, one of the dissident leaders, Omar Al-Mahaishi, a former member of the Revolutionary Command Council, who broke with Gadafy in 1975, may have been captured by the Libyans.

It's possible that Libyan intelligence and security over-estimate their opponents; in 1981 they may have under-estimated Hissein Habré when he was in exile and on the CIA payroll in the Sudan. For that misjudgment they paid a price they don't want to repeat now. For several months after the Libyan General People's Congress issued a call for the 'liquidation of the enemies of the people and revolution' in February last year, little happened. But then a similar call by a conference of revolutionary committees in February 1980 triggered off the assassination campaign in Europe.

On 21 January this year, two gunmen shot Amar Taggazy, Libya's representative in Rome; a hitherto unknown group calling itself 'Al-Burkan' (the Volcano) claimed responsibility. The Libyan media accused the chief of PLO security, Salah Khalaf, of planning the murder in retaliation for Libyan support of the anti-Arafat rebels within the PLO. PLO officials say that they had nothing to do with Taggazy's death — US diplomats say they aren't sure who did it. If 'Al-Burkan' is a front for one of the dissident groups, the assassination would represent a significant escalation in their activities. It was also the first time a senior Libyan official has been murdered since 1973, when the Israelis shot down a Libyan airliner carrying the information minister. Both are reasons why Libyan intelligence staff might press Gadafy to approve an escalation in their response.

Taggazy's death occurred during the 1984 session of the General People's Congress and, on 16 February, the congress communiqué announced a reshuffle of several major government positions. In all there were 11 new appointments at the top. All of the re-shuffled officials had served for many years at ministerial level in the Libyan government. In fact, Libya's bureaucratic elite has remained stable for longer than is typical of most Middle Eastern or European governments; the new appointments have almost nothing to do with security or defence, with the exception of Colonel Bilqasim, whose appointment to chief of external security suggests that Gadafy wanted to make more visible his concern about the overseas dissidents.

Within days of the government reshuffle, the London embassy was itself purged, and Adam Kuwairi, the principal representative, ousted. This move was very similar to the 1980 'people's committee' takeover. Dissidents became nervous that a repetition of the 1980 attacks might be in the offing. The 10 March bombings in the UK appeared to confirm just that. These events are seemingly linked to the changes in the foreign secretariat in February.

Ali Treiki returned from the UN mission to replace Abdulati Ubaydi in the foreign affairs post, but it appears unlikely that Treiki was responsible for the takeover at the London embassy in February. It is possible that control of the embassy personnel was split between Treiki and Bilqasim — there was a similar split in control of the Libyan missions in 1979-80 — and that it was Bilqasim who was calling the shots in the embassy in St James's Square, before the 17 April incident. Whoever was issuing the orders in Tripoli, it is clear that Taggazy's death had increased the apprehension of the new 'people's committee' that they might be the target of another assassination. Because the professionalism of Taggazy's assassins — who have not been caught — contrasted with the clumsiness of previous actions by the dissidents, the Libyans may have been convinced they were dealing with a sophisticated Western intelligence operation. This was a paranoid, inflammable mixture for the occupants of the embassy building to handle.

Bureaucratic changes at the education secretariat also indicate trouble inside Libya's universities. There, Gadafy has long used revolutionary committees, the Libyan equivalent of Mao's Red Guards, to wage ideological warfare against what he regards as bourgeois aspirations among the student body — for graduate study abroad, BMWs, boozy weekends in Malta and well-paid jobs.

Unhappiness among the students with military conscription forced Gadafy to abandon more ambitious military training proposals that were presented to the congress in February and to order an end to compulsory military training for young women. The congress also passed resolutions urging increased efforts by the government to find jobs for Libyan graduates in place of foreigners who still dominate the managerial and technical levels of many state enterprises.

The hanging of two students at Tripoli university just before the London incident was a hard-line warning Gadafy may have intended to convey at the same time as he offered concessions to the students. Whenever actions by the revolutionary committees have led to unpopular excesses, Gadafy has refused to repudiate them. Instead he has used the blue telephone to put the permanent bureaucrats in charge of cleaning up the mess. □

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SRI LANKA

Tamils back the Tigers

Violence in Jaffna has erupted again — this time meeting a newly-formed resistance reports Amrit Wilson

THE ARMY in Sri Lanka has once again gone on the rampage in the Tamil north of the country, firing indiscriminately on civilians and burning shops and homes. The official reason given for this new spate of state violence is, incredibly, an article in *India Today,* a wide-circulation Indian magazine. It claimed that 'leftist inspired' Tamil guerrillas are being trained in South India.

The article appeared in Sri Lanka on 21 March; within two days a new minister of National Security, Lalith Athulathmudali, was appointed. On 24 March he sought the blessings of the Buddhist Mahanayakes (priests) for his aim of 'wiping out terrorism' and the next day he was in Jaffna, the main town of the Tamil north, with 2,000 commandos. Three days later the armed forces, under Brigadier Seneviratne, a well-known 'tough soldier', went into action. The crowded market in the village of Chunnakam was sprayed with bullets. Eight people were killed and at least 22 injured. On 9 April, after an attack on an army convoy by guerrillas of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the army went on the rampage, burning shops on the main street of Jaffna and attacking the Church of Our Lady of Refuge. Catholics poured out of their homes in angry retaliation. They attacked a Buddhist temple and a Sinhala school, both of which have long been used as army bases. No Sinhalese person was injured but the army began to fire on the crowd. They killed 35 people.

Since then arbitrary killings have continued, along with massive arrests. In one village, 40 people were rounded up and taken away. In Jaffna, with its battered buildings, army helicopter patrols and frequent curfews, some families are stocking up with food. Others are moving out to the comparative safety of the villages.

A PLETHORA of liberation movements claim leadership for this new resistance. For, after the violence of last summer, there is no doubt that Tamils now see their political voice in a nationalist movement, conducted through guerrilla action. TULF, the Tamil parliamentary party, is quite discredited. But most of the nationalist groups are based in India, and only the LTTE — or Tigers as they are popularly known — have any real organisation or membership in the country.

LTTE has evolved over the last 12 years from a loose-knit youth movement reacting spontaneously to state violence with hit-and-run tactics to a disciplined guerrilla organisation. Its base is strongest in the rural areas. 'People in the villages and towns', claims LTTE's representative in London, 'may not call themselves Tigers, but they shelter and protect us and see us as their hope for the future, so we can move among them like "fish in the sea".'

LTTE's wall-posters and pamphlets are to be found in towns and even small villages all over the north and east, and occasionally there are instant meetings advising people on a variety of issues. For example, in May 1983 the Tigers called for the boycott of a local election — more than 99 per cent of the population accordingly did not vote. LTTE have also had some success in administering their own law and order. In one case the Tamil Chairman of a Rural Development Board, who was cheating the contract labourers of their wages, paid up when he was 'warned' by the Tigers and, in another, LTTE intervened in a Hindu-Muslim clash which the police had failed to stop by cornering and threatening the Hindus.

Tamil nationalism has drawn the contempt of many Sinhalese marxists; nonetheless, the LTTE is managing to represent popular feeling. For example, last November the government asked Tamil students who had fled from southern universities in the summer to return. The Tigers issued a pamphlet asking them not to. The students obeyed and, instead of returning, organised sit-downs in the Jaffna University campus, demanding the right to continue their studies in the Tamil area. On 9 January, nine students began a 'fast unto death' on their own initiative.

The government was adamant and when a woman student became comotose the authorities began to discuss calling in the army and beginning force-feeding. The LTTE met the students' organisation and under the eyes of the university authorities the nine hunger strikers were whisked away to India. But LTTE then issued a pamphlet on proper tactics, pointing out the failure of Bobby Sands and the Irish hunger strikers to shift an intransigent government.

Behind the Jayawardene government and Sinhalese state lie the West's military and economic interests, causing deep unease among Tamils. This year US-funded agencies are carrying out 'water research' in order to provide fresh water to Tamil villages. In the process they have carried out detailed surveys of the whole area — surveys which the Tamils fear will be made available to the army.

Meanwhile a series of US politicians has visited Sri Lanka, reaffirming an 'excellent relationship'; promising 'modern training' for the Sri Lankan navy and even complimenting the Sri Lankan Embassy in the US for countering Eelam supporters there. Underneath is a tacit understanding that sooner or later the US will move into the naval base at Trincomalee. When it does Mrs Gandhi is unlikely to intervene to support the Tamil nationalists. As LTTE spokesman A. S. Bala-Singham has said in an interview in the Indian magazine *Sunday:* 'Mrs Gandhi's hands are tied. . . The Sri Lankan government has always wielded Trincomalee as a trump card — they had earlier agreed to keep it a free zone (i.e. free of bases) provided India helped to crush the Liberation Tigers.'

RUSSIA Broken Idols, Solemn Dreams

DAVID SHIPLER

'A perceptive, incisive, subtle portrait of Russia, elegantly written by a superb journalist' –
– Hedrick Smith, author of *The Russians*

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BRETECHER

ART FILM

I got $50,000 for the whole of "Some Like it Hard" and that had to cover everything
I shot it in three or four days, edited it in three and dubbed it in 24 hours flat...
it was all done at a friends chateau in Bordeaux and all he wanted was to be on the set
I've never understood why a porn film can't have a good script
yeah, a good pornographic film!
something with a little bit... I dunno... with good photography
it wouldn't pay
don't forget that 90% of our audience couldn't care less about the quality of the camerawork
arty photography is consciously erotic and eroticism is a product of bourgeois culture
your average viewer has no taste because he doesn't know anybetter ...and it's not my responsibility to change that!
all the same, I'm not doing any of this because I like it...
... it's to fund the film I really want to make
what kind of film?
oh... something political
BRETECHER

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LETTERS

A former NF member writes

Anthony David Jones, Ashton-u-Lyne

The *NS* editorial of 20 April, 'NCCL and the National Front', was a fascinating and informative piece of political journalism. In my misspent younger days I was foolish enough to join the National Front and I became personally aquainted with several of the Front's leaders, including Joe Pearce, and so I believe I can see some ulterior motive in Pearce's seeking NCCL advice.

You accurately noted that 'the National Front does not see the state as being on its side'. The Front is also antagonistic towards the NCCL — remember the attack on the NCCL meeting at UMIST (University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology) in November 1975? The complaint by the Front was, in my view, prompted as much by malice towards the NCCL as by dislike for the police action. Mr Pearce and his colleagues undoubtedly thought that no matter what the response of the NCCL was, the Front would make political capital. I have no doubt that in forthcoming weeks government spokespersons faced with NCCL criticism will respond that the NCCL is a left-wing political organisation and quote their refusal to aid the NF as proof.

There are further reasons why the NCCL should aid all organisations, including the National Front. The police have used the Front to practise policing methods which they later used to good effect on less repulsive organisations. After all, the incidents in which coaches of flying pickets were halted or turned back occurred only a few weeks after Joe Pearce and his coaches were held up in Yorkshire. Despite your claim that march bans have 'been used almost entirely against the Left', the first recent use of the ban was in October 1977 by Greater Manchester Chief Constable James Anderton against the National Front in Tameside. The constant heavy police methods of control used at Front activities gave the police valuable practice and also provided an excuse when challenged by the Left or black groups over their methods.

Finally, the Front has a siege mentality. You cannot expect to change people's minds by ignoring, abusing or assaulting them. The main cause of my rejecting the National Front was not fear of my personal safety. Boycotts merely serve to increase one's contempt for 'liberal' organisations. There were a few anti-fascist activists who occasionally would talk to me at work. Sevêral Asian co-workers, despite knowing my background, would pass the time of day, while a few friends who despised the Front would still socialise (whilst arguing against my views). Eventually either my own good sense or their persuasive powers won through and I resigned from the Front and have since repudiated publicly my former position. If the NCCL had attempted to help the Front, and in doing so had caused one, or more, members to question their position within the Front — then the effort would have been more than worth the time spent or criticism incurred.

Emotion and dull memories

Joan Smith, London N7

Gitta Sereny (*NS* 20 April) rightly says 'many journalists on Times Newspapers' were 'in an uproar' over the decision to publish material from the so-called Hitler Diaries in the *Sunday Times*. She also writes that she saw their protest as 'an emotional one against letting Hitler speak'.

Nonsense. I was one of the most outspoken opponents of the paper's decision to publish extracts from the unauthenticated diaries and made my position clear at a heated meeting of the *Sunday Times* NUJ chapel, of which I was then an official. My objection, as I made clear to Gitta and others at the time, was to what seemed to me a reversal of normal journalistic practice at the *Sunday Times*. To state, as the paper had, that it intended to go on publishing extracts from the diaries unless they were proved to be forgeries, struck me as abandoning the high standards of scrutiny and judgement to which the paper had over the years justifiably laid claim. My objection would have been exactly the same if the *Sunday Times* had suddenly announced its intention to publish unauthenticated documents purportedly written by Ms Koo Stark to Prince Andrew.

I was certainly not alone in holding this view and I am surprised that Gitta should have allowed her own emotional involvement with the diaries to dull her memory about the important, and still valid, reasons given by those who opposed publication of material from them in the *Sunday Times* at that time.

Bob Sharp 1913-1984

Past and present *New Statesman* staff and contributors will be saddened to learn of the sudden death last week of Bob Sharp. He had just been to visit his old friends at the *NS*, as he did every few months, and on the way from us to meet another former colleague he collapsed and died.

Bob was resident caretaker at Great Turnstile for 30 years. He was one of the truly great characters associated with the *New Statesman*, as well as a congenial colleague. When he retired in 1979 it felt like the end of an era.

Stop the City and the Press

Lorraine Hewitt, Canterbury

Tony Weaver (Letters 13 April) deplores the 'Stop the City' demonstration on 29 March as an 'appalling mockery of the peace movement', 'hooligans on a rampage', and adds: 'We cannot accuse the media of distortion'.

My 14-year-old daughter who attended that event experienced rather different behaviour and language from the police to that reported in the *Times* and the *Guardian* and evidently taken on trust by Mr Weaver. She, together with three young friends aged between 14 and 16, went to this event anticipating a carnival, youthful atmosphere. As pacifists of a libertarian socialist outlook, they had sympathised with the GLC demonstration but had found it rather uninspired.

They all returned from 'Stop the City' shocked, and with bruises from the police policy of deliberately crushing the crowd and charging them on horses where there was no space for them to retreat. They saw the police indiscriminately kicking and hitting young men. My daughter's group were not themselves beaten up as others were, but the police *did* push them hard, maul them, pull their earrings, push them over and yank them up by the hair.

The police also refused to allow these children — and other protesters — to leave the occasion. The smallest girl was badly bruised on her face, weeping and bleeding and an adult bystander tried to protect her and assist her out of the crush. A policeman pulled the woman's sheltering arms from the child with an oath. Badly frightened, they begged the cordon of law to let them through to safety. The reply was: 'This is what you fucking well wanted, this is what you fucking well get!' and a savage push back into the crowd. This happened several times before they 'escaped' from the police.

I phoned the *Guardian* newsdesk that night and spoke to two reporters who both said that reports such as mine had been coming in all night. The next day the paper printed the 'police' version of the event, complete with a photo of a mounted officer captioned with the reassuring words 'come along now'. I wrote both to the *Guardian* and *The Times*, contesting their account and I imagine others must also have done so, but no other report has subsequently appeared.

My own response to this event is *not* to urge my comrades to be even more forebearing and saintly, but to point out the extraordinary police harassment of miners; that here in 'quiet' Kent the police have increased the numbers of stop-and-search approaches to the young since the NUM strike began; and to see the police handling of that demonstration Mr Weaver deplores as an indication of their self-confidence and re-definition of the public as the enemy.

Liberals hung up too

Cllr Steve Comer, Bristol

I regret that John Rentoul's article, 'Labour hung up over Liberal tendencies' (*NS* 13 April), seems to seek to mislead your readers. He seems to imply that because 13 of the 27 councils with no overall control have Conservative administrations, then it must be the Liberal/SDP Alliance that has put the Tories in.

I am one of the six Liberal councillors who hold the balance of power on Bristol City Council and so can speak with some experience of the reality of the situation, at least in this city. The Tories came to the annual meeting last year and proposed a committee structure which gave them six out of the 11 seats on each committee. When the vote was taken the Liberals and left-wing Labour councillors voted against the Tory proposals but the majority Old Guard Labourites all abstained, thus ensuring a Tory administration. So in Bristol the Conservatives administration was put in by the Labour Party and *not* by the Liberals.

As for the note, 'likely to return to Labour control after 3 May', I can only wonder who you get your information from, as the leader of the Labour group was quoted in the local press recently as saying that he did not think any party would have overall control after this year's election.

THE RELIGION OF TRUTH

Truth is that which is. Our being aware more fully of this reality is a matter of the development of the relevant but normally dormant faculties. We can know much more about the inner and spiritual realms of nature than is generally realised. The religion of truth is a matter of direct experience rather than adherence to dogma and belief.

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Bob Woffinden

Half a mo', Hitler

The World We Left Behind: A Chronicle of the Year 1939
ROBERT KEE *Weidenfeld* £11.95

One of the 'innumerable fascinating photographs' in the book — the ATS in holiday mood

Writing history is by definition a process of embalming, of preparing dead matter for public display. There is no thrill of uncertainty; the denouement is already common knowledge, so there is little potential for narrative suspense. Moments of great importance necessarily thrive in the historical imagination while the months of apparent insignificance are neglected.

In this respect, 1939 offers a particularly telling example of the shortcomings of history. The date has always signified the start of the Second World War, so that the atmosphere prior to its outbreak, during the first eight months, has been almost wholly forgotten. Robert Kee's purpose in writing *The World We Left Behind* is to try to rediscover the ignorance of what lay ahead, to recapture the currents underlying and shaping the momentous events. By constructing the work from contemporary sources, and eschewing those written or published later, he has attempted to map exactly what the year was like on a day-to-day basis, before history had irrevocably divided its cast into heroes and villains.

Even from this most potentially favourable of perspectives, however, the appeasers still emerge as a wretchedly craven bunch. (It is interesting that virtually the entire post-war pre-Thatcher Conservative leadership — Churchill, Eden, Macmillan and Heath — emerged from the anti-appeasement lobby; Kee quotes Heath, then still at Oxford, castigating Chamberlain.) Rarely in the field of British government was so much overlooked by so many. Throughout those peacetime months of 1939, appalling evidence of ill-treatment of central European Jews was accumulating. The liner 'St Louis', with almost 1,000 German Jews on board, stayed at sea for over six weeks while frantic international negotiations were conducted. Was any country willing to take in its human cargo of despair? (There were attempted suicides when it seemed as though the ship would have to return to Hamburg.) The Western democracies were so loath to accommodate the Jewish refugees that, as one Tory MP pointed out, they had to answer for their sins of omission, just as Hitler did for his sins of commission.

At the beginning of the year, optimism had been running fairly high, in the wake of the honourable peace settlement which Chamberlain claimed to have achieved at Munich. The *Daily Express* confidently told its readers that 'there will be no great war in Europe in 1939', and then used the text of Hitler's speech at the end of January as evidence of its prescience. 'We were right. We have got the confirmation straight from Hitler's mouth.'

The drama unfolding in central Europe was by no means the only major foreign news story. The Spanish civil war was approaching its distressing finale, and in the Far East there was the Sino-Japanese conflict. Britain was trying to contain its own mini-theatres of war in Palestine and Ireland. Kee must have been swamped with material.

In March the balsa-wood strategy of Chamberlain and his foreign secretary, Lord Halifax, crumbled under the German occupation of Prague. From then on, even though the Prime Minister continued to vacillate, it was downhill all the way. As Labour's leader in the Lords remarked, the government's foreign policy increasingly resembled the wind of heaven — 'whence it came and whither it goeth, no man knows'. War preparations seemed equally scatter-brained. Dover council discovered to its amazement that the town had been designated a suitable evacuation area

A.J.P. Taylor has written that, after the annexation of Czechoslovakia, 'there followed an underground explosion of public opinion such as the historian cannot trace in precise terms'. Clearly, Kee, through his contemporary analysis, had hoped to chart and explain such shifts in the public temper. He is not notably successful, because he has relied almost entirely for his source material on newspapers, which offered almost as fallible a guide to the domestic and international situation then as they do today.

The 'public mood' exists independently of the government and the press. Mass-Observation, after all, had been initiated precisely because of the gulf perceived between the people and the press. A White Paper published in October to cement anti-Fascism was probably unnecessary, because the message had already been assimilated. As the *New York Times* had earlier reported, 'the mood of the country [Britain] has been revolutionised; public opinion continues to run far ahead of the government. . .' Much of the UK press had continued to run alongside the government.

In order to assess public sympathies better, Kee could have turned to other contemporary sources: Mass-Observation, certainly, but also

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the literature of the year. Mention could have been made of books such as Graham Greene's *The Confidential Agent*, which superbly evoked the war-weariness engendered by the hostilities in Spain, and Nevil Shute's *Whatever Happened to the Corbetts?*, which attempted to dispel a certain public levity epitomised by the slogan (reproduced here), 'Half a mo', Hitler, let's have our holidays first'.

There are other reservations. The social background is not particularly well-drawn — 'The Lambeth Walk', the fad of the year, is barely mentioned — and in this respect *The World We Left Behind* is a misleading title.

The book is so impressively produced, with innumerable fascinating photographs, that it seems churlish to cavil further. Nevertheless I will. Since the *dramatis personae* remain the same throughout, a cast-list at the beginning would have eliminated the need, say, to describe Attlee as leader of the opposition every time he makes an appearance. Also, the maps are completely inadequate.

Finally, Kee observes that 1939 was not without 'flickerings of that progressive and idealistic part of mankind's nature', and cites as evidence of this the execution of secret police officials in the USSR: a curious notion that the execution of anybody should serve as proof of anything 'progressive and idealistic'.

Overall, though, this is a thought-provoking book which remains absorbing even if Kee hasn't quite fulfilled his own brief. He has pieced together the threads of the year with consummate narrative skill, and unearthed much of great interest. Clearly, TV-am's loss is Weidenfeld's gain.

All of which leaves insufficient space to recommend John Stevenson's *British Society 1914-45* adequately. It is an excellent addition to the Pelican Social History of Britain, a series of gathering importance. □

POETRY

John Lucas

Translating difficulties

Complete Poems

SALVATORE QUASIMODO trans. JACK BEVAN *Anvil Press* £10 & £5.95

Complete Poems

EDITH SODERGRAN trans. DAVID MCDUFF *Bloodaxe Books* £7.95 & £4.50

Of all the major Italian poets of the 20th century Quasimodo is probably the most difficult to translate, which may explain why he is comparatively little known in this country. Of course, we all know that poetry is what gets left out of the translation, because Robert Frost has told us so. Yet we can usually get a reasonable sense of what the original was like and, if the translator is any good, what he/she produces will be worth reading for its own sake. The problem with Quasimodo, however, is that his imaginative mode is so strange to us that it's almost impossible to grasp what he is up to. All the more reason, then, to welcome this very fine *Complete Poems*. It is now possible to see what all the fuss was about. (Quasimodo was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1959 for poetry 'which with classical fire expresses the tragic experience of life in our time'.)

As we might expect, the fuss was about the wrong thing. The poetry that came out of Quasimodo's war experiences — and which I take it the Nobel Committee had in mind in making its citation — isn't particularly good. The earlier work is a very different matter. In his brief but useful introduction Bevan remarks that during most of the 1930s Quasimodo was one of the hermeticists, and that his work then aimed 'at achieving a direct impact by its emotive use of language. It aimed at evoking rather than describing. . . This was *poesia pura*, image evoking object'. This is no doubt true, but it's also what makes it difficult for us to cope with him. For his essentially symbolist approach is one which, Yeats apart, has never really been accepted into English poetry.

How then are we to respond to a poem such as the following?

> Stilled is the ancient voice.
> I hearken to fleeting echoes,
> deep night's oblivion
> in the starry water.
>
> Ulysses' island rises
> from the heavenly fire.
> slow rivers bear trees and skies
> in the thunder of lunar shores.
>
> The bees bring us gold, beloved:
> secret time of the transmutations.

In an earlier translation, published in 1966, Robin Fulton rather brisked this poem up, but to have done so seems to me a mistake. 'The ancient words are locked/utterly away' is not only less accurate (Quasimodo wrote *'Ferma é l'antica voce'*) but feels altogether too business-like. And Bevan's 'the bees bring us gold, beloved', is nearer to Quasimodo's *'le api, amata, ci recano l'oro'* than Fulton's 'Lady, the bees bring us gold', and also makes better sense. He is right to have stuck by Quasimodo's slightly antiquated vocabulary, the syntactic inversions and almost decadent cadences; it is the best way of implying that the rapt tone of so much of his work makes him the kind of poet that many of the Nineties poets would have liked to have been, if only they had had his gifts. Meanwhile, what is the poem about?

'I know if you don't ask me,' St Augustine said, when trying to account for time, and to some extent this is how I feel about 'Island of Ulysses'. On the other hand it is clearly a love-poem, whatever else it is (Fulton's Eliot-like 'Lady' strikes the wrong note by giving the poem a religious dimension it surely doesn't have — not in that way, at least); Quasimodo creates the sense of a universe known or apprehended through ecstatic vision. Alchemy — the bees' gold — therefore works as a fit expression of transmutations from fragmented, time-locked perceptions, to a momentarily perceived wholeness of vision.

As far as I can judge, the best example of this kind of symbolist poem is 'On the Banks of the Lambro', which in Bevan's translation becomes a remarkable poem in its own right. But then, at the end of the 1930s, the fragmentary world took over. With the coming of the Second World War Quasimodo began to write a very different kind of poetry: declamatory, public and frequently rather boring. ('I have seen you: it was you/with your knowledge precisely extermination-guided,/loveless, Christless'). Or is this merely evidence of another kind of poetry to which the English can't adjust? I think not. For it seems to go against Quasimodo's natural talent, so that one imagines him as the plagued speaker of Tadeusz Rózewicz's poem 'They Shed the Load': 'he comes to you/and says// 'you are not responsible/either for the world or the end of the world//. . . they forget that/contemporary poetry means struggle for breath' (I quote from Adam Czerniawski's marvellous version). I do not think that the struggle for breath in Quasimodo's later poems makes them any better. It's as if the unifying vision that made his earlier poems unique has dimmed into the common light of day.

'Vision.' The word has also been applied to Edith Södergran's poetry. But where Jack Bevan's translations persuade you that Quasimodo is a true poet, David McDuff's versions of Södergran make her seem merely eccentric — even, dare it be said, mad. I don't think that he can be blamed for this.

> You will not get me to believe in disgusting flies
> — revenge and petty lusts.
> I believe in strong hyacinths that drip the scent of
> ages.
> Lilies are healing and pure as my own sharpness.
> You will not get me to believe in disgusting flies
> that gather stink and plague.
> I believe that great stars are making way for my
> desire —
> somewhere between sun and south, between
> north and night.

The first six lines of this little poem are tense with suppressed hysteria; the final two are like nothing so much as Joanna Southcott. And this, I think, is the problem. Cut off physically from the world, both by the extreme remoteness of the Finnish village where she lived in a perpetual frenzy of discontent, and by the severe tuberculosis which eventually killed her, Edith Södergran fed on her own fantasies until she could not tell the genuine from the fake. In his introduction McDuff speaks, very well, of 'the sense of intolerable restraint, of accumulating energy crying to be let loose', that fuels so many of her poems. But the sad truth is that in the poems themselves that sense comes across as merely pathological.

To read about the miseries of Södergran's life is pretty harrowing. But — and I do not offer this comparison as a way of scoring easy points — it is no less harrowing to read about the life of her exact contemporary, Marina Tsvetaeva. Yet Tsvetaeva is clearly a great poet whereas Södergran, at least on the basis of these translations, is less of a poet than a case. □

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FICTION
Angela McRobbie

Soundings

Gorilla, My Love
TONI CADE BAMBARA *Women's Press* £3.95
Hix Nix Stix Pix
DAVID LLEWELLYN BURDETT *Cape* £8.95

Toni Cade Bambara's collection of short stories written over the last 15 years is so great it lifts you off the ground. It lets you hear the best sounds of the (black American) city and treats you to a series of narratives which move past you like flickering images from a silent movie. When they do slow down they resemble those photographs whose naturalness makes them seem like chance snapshots, but whose simplicity belies the craft, skill, artifice and imagination of the photographer.

Together the stories sail effortlessly into that territory much beloved and preciously guarded by men. For so many writers and sociologists, musicians and film-makers (all men), the city has been *the* subject of our time. And how women fit in depends very much on their idiosyncracies, their quirks, their views on sexual politics. Bambara pushes her way through all this prejudice and shows how urban life can vibrate and reverberate just as much for women. And by placing both old *and* young women at the centre of her vision of the city, she debunks so many of the male myths. Which is to say that there is little violence, absolutely no macho gang-warfare and little fear except from the occasional police provocation. Maybe this is wishful thinking, but Bambara makes the city livable in for women. Her young heroines stroll through the streets by day and loiter around at night. They know they get labelled as deviant by the authorities but what this version of these so-called delinquent activities shows is that the 'problem' of the ghetto is definitively not the problem of the people, despite poverty, unemployment, racism and everything else. The problem is rather that of those who seek, with some difficulty, to control it.

This makes Bambara's collection politically acute as well as poetically alive. But it's a politics best suited to the form she works with. It's there in small gestures, in short phrases, even in the last line. It graces the stories without ever drowning them out. Each of the stories speaks as though the author couldn't get the words out of her mouth quickly enough. What they reflect, of course, is the oral tradition of story-telling at its greatest. The 'talkin' blues', the seductive voice alone or accompanied by music, which engages its audience not by great noise but by suggestion, not by force but by inflection.

The image of a young, long-legged, awkward and exuberant girl fleets through many of the narratives. She is frighteningly bright and devastatingly big-headed. She also carries on her shoulders, without being arrogant or self righteous, an unerring sense of justice. Anyway she uses all these qualities to see clearly the black society in which she lives. The story 'Gorilla My Love' is a diatribe against the way children and young people are deceived and misled by adults. When nothing is as attractive as an afternoon at the movies, the disappointment Hazel feels when, instead of *Gorilla, King of Kings* appears is acute and demands retributive action.

'Raymond's Run' tells how the same girl combines looking after her handicapped brother with training for sports' day by running endlessly with him round blocks and across wide streets. She is his protector, his champion and his teacher. She fights off the abuse he gets, runs and wins, it seems, for him. In fact, what is strongest in the entire collection is not so much a question of what happens, rather one of what creates the flow, what generates the movement between one story and the other. Invariably it is the language. In 'My Man Bovanne' for example, a simple sequence of events becomes a small drama, a musical in miniature. An older woman is being lectured by her 'militant' and politicised children. They want her to get respectable, to give up short skirts, wigs and make-up and most of all slow-dancing with the likes of the also old, and blind, Bovanne. The woman insists on her right to pleasure and ends up pre-empting them politically, 'Cause old folks is the nation'.

It is interesting how these stories fit alongside the standard white account of growing up in America, from *Huckleberry Finn* to *Catcher in the Rye.* I'm not sure what to make of this other than to suggest that perhaps in writing there is, and always has been, a kind of symbolic cross-fertilisation less possible elsewhere. But, whatever its connections with white culture, the rootedness of Bambara's writing in contemporary black culture is absolute. Reading her is like pondering over all those words and phrases which more often drift from the sound-system or over the airwaves. And this relationship between and across forms is what makes black writing right now so important. If music is close to literature and rapping close to poetry then not one but a number of barriers are being broken down. Those which divide young and old audiences, those which have traditionally marked off high art from popular culture and those which have rigidly kept the producers well away from the consumers.

It is difficult to do justice to David Llewellyn Burdett's first novel **Hix Nix Stix Pix** in the short space remaining. I didn't like it to begin with but it undoubtedly won me over. It is something of an epic, a highly cynical meta-vision of Hollywood and its history. Its take-off point is one for which I have a lot of sympathy: the assumption that image and media are as real if not more real than reality. Where this takes us is as uncertain in Burdett's novel as it is in the French philosophers who pursue this line of thought a great deal further. In *Hix*. . . it seems to lead to cynicism, despair and alcoholism on the part of its hero. It's a novel too much influenced by Fitzgerald and Gore Vidal, but it shares with each of them much wit and, ironically, a little modesty. □

NEXT WEEK
Naomi Mitchison remembers Hilaire Belloc; Ted Honderich reviews Derek Parfit.

INCEST
Barney Bardsley

Fresh air

Father-Daughter Rape
ELIZABETH WARD *Women's Press* £4.95

One of the most important breakthroughs in feminist politics has been the smashing of the incest taboo. Vital work by the Incest Survivors' Campaign, backed up by excellent literature such as the American *Father-Daughter Incest* (Judith Hermann) and a useful factual book from the Scottish publisher Stramullion (*Incest: Fact and Myth* by Sarah Nelson) has confronted society with a fundamental problem. Given the high statistics, and the personal testimonies of incest victims, how can we deny that there is widescale abuse of girl children by adult men?

Elizabeth Ward's understandable reaction is one of anger. Let us not be evasive, she says. 'Incest' sounds almost pleasant. What happens to many girls at the hands of their fathers, or fathers' friends, is nothing short of rape. And if you are abused because of your sex at a young age — anything from *six weeks* upwards, in her findings — then what hope do you have of growing up a free and happy adult?

The book starts with the personal accounts of several very unhappy women, all abused as children, and all now bitter, angry, resentful people. This part of the book made me uneasy. In recounting intimate personal details of abuse it is too easy to reproduce the roles of voyeur and victim. But, as the theoretical part of this book reveals, the lives of these women are inextricably linked with those of *all* women.

But why do these girls not fight back? goes the familiar cry. Fight back? At five? At three? At 18 months? As Elizabeth Ward explains, the passivity of the daughters 'is the manifest behaviour of all oppressed peoples who are not in a state of open rebellion'.

Ah, yes, but some of these girls *like it,* booms the voice of reason. Some of the interviewees in this book did experience sexual pleasure, even as their minds told them something was dreadfully wrong (most men swear their children to absolute secrecy — hardly an affirmation of the 'natural' function of incest), with lasting repercussions in adult life.

Perhaps the most brutal aspect of this type of abuse is the conspiracy of silence which surrounds it. When doctors find traces of oral, vaginal or anal VD in girl children, says Ms Ward, all their professional experiences flies out of the window. They start talking of toilet seats or contaminated sheets, ANYTHING rather than face the truth. And if the girl herself plucks up courage to tell someone she is often punished for 'making it up'.

This is a distressing subject, but it needs to be aired, and Elizabeth Ward's book, though Australian based and somewhat academic and dry in places, is enormously valuable as the first major feminist study of incest to be published in this country. □

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SHORTER REVIEWS

An Old Man's Diary

A.J.P. TAYLOR *Hamish Hamilton* £8.95

Alan Taylor is, in his 78th year, 'not worried at all about the approach of death. It is becoming for me the order of release'. His best lecture ever in his opinion, the Romanes delivered without notes in the Sheldonian Theatre, Oxford, is now published sandwiched between his Langham Diary entries for the *Listener* and his diaries for the *London Review of Books*. They make fascinating reading and give an intimate insight into this abrasive historian.

As with all great men his most admirable quality is his ability to change his mind. This happens over the Falklands war, and he concludes 'Our mission is no longer to be the general liberator of mankind'. He has every wish to see the Junta humiliated, 'but not at the cost of British lives'. For the same reason he wishes to see the removal of British troops from Northern Ireland. Professor Michael Howard provokes his criticism when complaining that Taylor's historical opinions are not the same as they were 20 years ago. 'I should hope not,' Taylor tartly retorts. He reminds us that before Marx died he had ceased to be a Communist and was 'a warm patron of the German Social Democratic Party'. We might yet see him change his mind about Michael Foot whom he describes at one point 'as a statesman of the first rank'.

He is scornful when he hears of Hitler's alleged diaries, disdaining others who rush into print about them: his characteristic remark is that even if they were real 'they would make no modification to historical record'.

Shrewd, humorous, delightful, Taylor's entries, regrettably undated, include reflections on cinema and television. On Abel Gance's silent movie *Napoleon,* Taylor, in typically debunking vein, notes 'Napoleon specializes in rushing from the left hand side of the screen to the right and back again. . . the film is very funny'. Some journal should have engaged him as its film critic.

Brian Martin

End of the Line

PHILIP BAGWELL *NLB* £14 *Verso* £3.95

Margaret Thatcher is surrounded by advisers who dislike trains and nationalised industries. Take that recently-beknighted pair Alfred Sherman and Alan Walters for examples. Sherman passionately advocates turning railways into roads. Walters believes that the answer to public transport is private minibuses. And Thatcher herself hasn't been on a train since she became prime minister.

This book chronicles the fate of British Rail since the Thatcher regime took power in 1979. Bagwell's is a perceptive analysis, as might be expected from the author of *The Transport Revolution from 1770,* which is the best history of transport around.

Bagwell quotes a speech Alan Walters gave to the Adam Smith Institute: 'I would love to see many railway lines in private hands. . . It would be very nice to get out of railways. The real wages you need to pay railway drivers are very low. People would almost pay you to drive a railway train.' Bagwell says that this 'small group of extremists' (including Sherman) has 'had the final say in transport policy over the last four years'.

Walters was the one who blocked British Rail's plans for electrification. He also had a considerable (if, on occasions, unseen) hand in the enquiry into British Rail's finance conducted by Sir David Serpell. Serpell proposed, among other options, that the railways' mileage could be cut from its present length of 10,500 miles to around 1,600 miles.

One of the members of the Serpell committee was Alfred Goldstein, an old friend of Walters. Walters said of Goldstein 'I suppose you could say he's a genius. He has a superb brain'. Goldstein is widely credited with toughening up the main Serpell report. However, Bagwell says that, when Goldstein showed Walters the draft report, he advised Goldstein not to sign it, and to write a tougher minority report.

Bagwell's book is well worth reading (and buying). It is the story of a government out to destroy anything with the word 'public' in it, public transport, public enterprise and (I wouldn't be a bit surprised) public houses.

The worst thing about the railways, according to one of Thatcher's predecessors, the Duke of Wellington, was that they helped the lower classes move around. Here's how Thatcher tried to put a stop to all that.

Mick Hamer

None but Ourselves: Masses v. Media in the Making of Zimbabwe

JULIE FREDERIKSE photos by BIDDY PARTRIDGE *Heinemann* £7.50

A great deal of valuable archival material was destroyed as a result of the panic that gripped white Rhodesian administrators and Special Branch officers following Mugabe's electoral victory in March 1980. Much of what survived has been collected and skilfully presented in Julie Frederikse's large-format photo-book — a museum of white Rhodesia gathered between soft covers, and a nasty reminder of the smell of colonialism at the hour before midnight. Frederikse and her diligent photographer companion, Biddy Partridge, have left few stones unturned: Ministry of Information propaganda, film clips, broadcasts, strip cartoons, political leaflets, T-shirts. As a student of the period I found a lot of material unfamiliar to me: it's not so much a book to read as to browse through while wearing a gas mask. See the police dogs expelling the Tangwena people from their ancestral lands! See the Tangwena huts being burnt by the representatives of law and order! The book also collects some interesting material from the Zanla side, as well as a frank account of the uneasy relationship between Zanla and Zipra in the Shabani area.

David Caute

As Oncein May: The Early Autobiography of Antonia White & Other Writings

ed. SUSAN CHITTY *Virago* £10.95

Antonia White was an only child, a solitary participant in a fantasy world of dolls and toy animals, with whom she acted out dramas in her West Kensington nursery. Among her constant companions were Mr Dash, a toy poodle, and Sceptre, her rocking horse, in some ways more *real* than her own parents, who remained remote and unapproachable. Her father was a venerable Victorian personage, inspiring a mixture of fear and awe in the young 'Eirene'. Her splendidly graphic and meticulously crafted description of his physical appearance and of the authoritarian character this reflected is a legacy of his perfectionism. There are many more instances of Ms White's observational flair: the smells and sights of the butcher's and chemist's shops; her first impressions of the countryside; and her visit to the British Museum accompanied by her father.

Antonia White, says her daughter in the Introduction, was extravagant and usually in debt, a trait which she may well have inherited from *her* mother. We learn, for example, that her mother rifled the housekeeping money to indulge her weakness for baubles, which sometimes superseded the young Antonia's need for a new dress or pair of shoes.

In retrospect, Antonia White seems generally tolerant of her mother's foibles, of what other women (not least her maternal grandmother) deemed as capricious, neglectful and un-motherly conduct. She stresses that her mother was fond of her 'in her own way'. Both longed for excitement, to break the tedium of their everyday lives.

Children are far more perceptive than their elders would care to believe, their antennae poised to gauge the subtlest changes in atmosphere. Different rooms have different moods and people's personalities can alter accordingly. Antonia remembers how the drawing room seemed to cast a 'benevolent spell' over its occupants, the 'halcyon calm' of Sunday tea contrasting with the friction of weekday dining-room meals, when her parents bitched and bickered like a pair of alien beings. With a horror of the humdrum, she appears not to have minded their frequent, passionate arguments. Nonetheless, she retreated from their aloofness, finding solace in her own fertile imaginings, in 'the rich underworld of the kitchen', and in her visits to Binesfield, the Sussex farmhouse home of spinster great-aunts Clara and Agnes. There, reality proved so absorbing that the act of daydreaming soon became superfluous.

A fascinating collection of work from the pen of a highly complex and enigmatic woman, who had to battle to overcome severe and lifelong bouts of writer's block.

Veronica Groocock

The Republic of Cousins: Women's Oppression in Mediterranean Society

GERMAINE TILLION *Al Saqi Books* £15 & £4.95

This is not an addition to the literature documenting the exploitation of women in distant and exotic countries. Rather, it is a fascinating, entertaining account by a distinguished French anthropologist of the effect of the cultural pre-history of the Mediterranean region on the lives of its women.

Much has changed since Germaine Tillion first published this book in French 17 years ago, based on 30 years of travel and study in North Africa. The effect of industrialisation in breaking down the legacy of centuries, which she noted in the societies on the Northern shore of the Mediterranean, is now beginning to bring change to Morocco and Algeria. Yet her essential argument remains relevant: the seclusion of women from the mainstream of Mediterranean society is the result not of religious teaching but of an ancient commitment to tribal identity ensured by the practice of marriage between first cousins. Such marriages are the foundation of the extended family/tribe which is the essential unit of society in the 'Republic of Cousins'.

Tillion's separation of this cultural legacy from the principles of Islam still flies in the face of conventional wisdom on Islam's attitude toward women: 'In Islam, as in Christianity, Mediterranean woman has regularly been despoiled. On the one hand despite the French Revolution, on the other, despite the Koran.'

The effect of urbanisation in accelerating the breakdown of tribal society is also subjected to Tillion's perceptive analysis. Women are exposed to a socially and economically deprived environment where respect for the individual, devoid of family protection, has yet to develop. 'The great victim of this situation, of course, is woman, who ceased to be a "cousin" but is not yet a "person".'

Deborah Pugh

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ART
John Spurling

Saved!

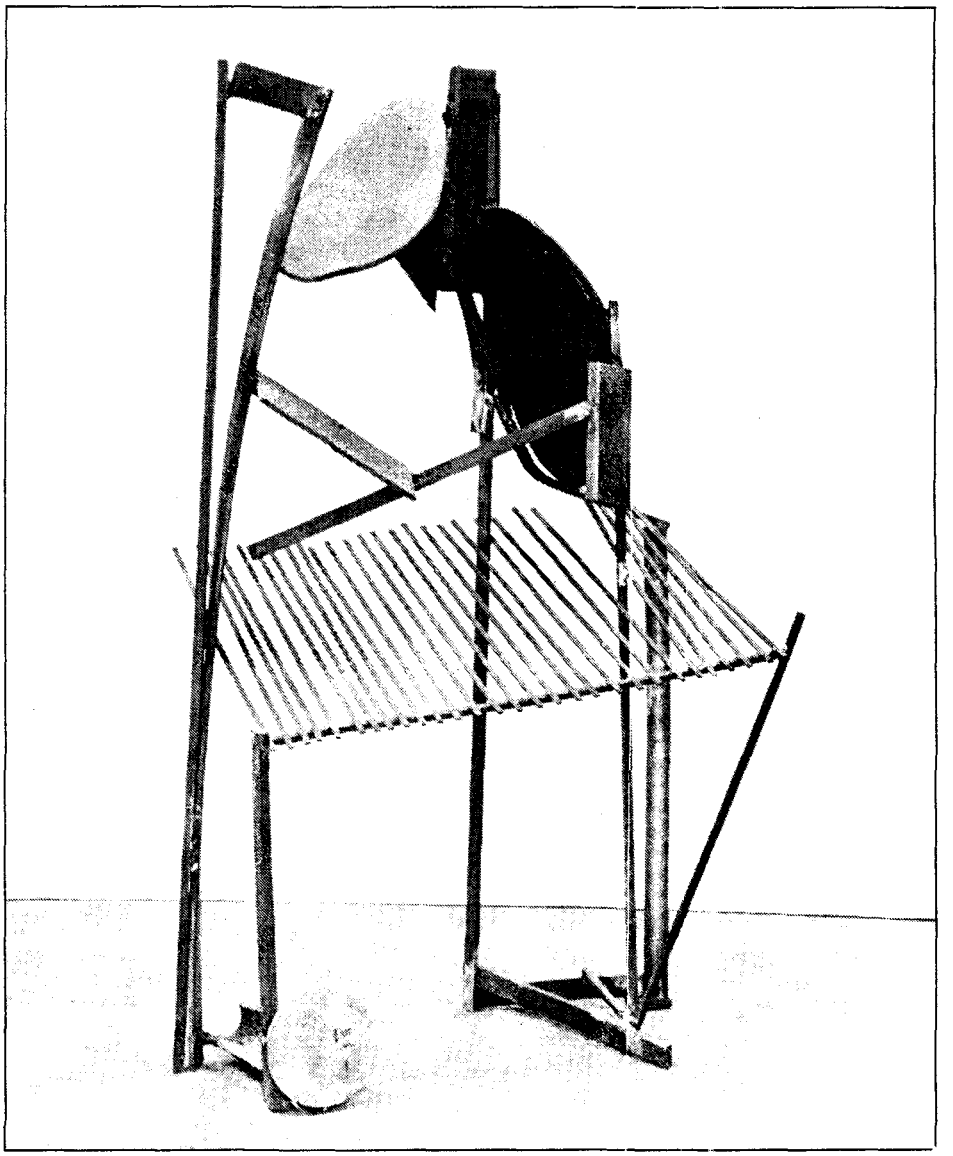
Anthony Caro
Serpentine until May 28, then Manchester, Leeds, Copenhagen, Düsseldorf, Barcelona

Gladstone and Queen Mary were both noted for the pleasure they took in felling trees. Gladstone at least did it to his own trees, but Queen Mary was apt to start ordering the clearance of other people's estates when they were absent. Sir William Rees-Mogg, the Arts Council's self-styled gardener, belongs perhaps in this company. The excuse of redistributing funds to the regions has been plainly shown to be hokum (by Robin Thornber and Michael Bogdanov in the *Guardian* of 9 April) and we are left to guess at the real motives for the new strategy of the axe. My own view is that it is a Gladstonian power-ploy — a delight in the removal of what others have planted and grown — coupled, slightly inconsistently, with a conservative preference for anything established and prestigious.

If so, then the Serpentine gallery was probably in even more danger of being felled than the Hayward, since, apart from Henry Moore and Giacometti and occasional lesser-known names such as Hilton, Frost and Kneale, most of the artists shown at the Serpentine have been young, experimental and unknown. The fact that the gallery is the most beautiful, the best lit and the best placed (especially for casual passing visitors) in London would hardly have weighed against its unsavoury reputation as a den of innovation. However, the threat has passed for the moment and the artist currently installed there happens to be both prestigious and innovatory.

Anthony Caro has just turned 60, but this touring exhibition is less a retrospective than a sample of his maturity. The art critic Tim Hilton has selected 31 of his best works of the last 15 years and displayed them inside and outside the gallery according to their size and spatial demands rather than their chronology. Few of the pieces have been shown in England before, though many will be partly familiar to Caro's admirers from the illustrations in William Rubin's and Diane Waldman's books about him. Hilton's catalogue traces Caro's chronological development since his first major retrospective at the Hayward in 1969, but is chiefly useful for the way it dwells on the sculptor's materials, his production of series of work from the different types of scrap that he brings into his studio or finds on working visits abroad — to steel mills in Italy or Canada, for instance.

Seeing only the tip of the iceberg (since, according to Hilton, Caro has so far produced nearly 2,000 pieces), one gets a false sense of the rapidity of Caro's changes of style. His scope and fertility are certainly astonishing but they derive from a steady process of passing a set of given characteristics through as many variations as possible. Here, even when the original materials are basically similar, as in the several pieces made from large flat panels of rusted steel with irregular edges, it is almost as if different artists have been at work. In *Veduggio Sound* — a tall ragged sort of doorway like a steel-age memory of Stonehenge — the emphasis is on thinness and upward movement; in *Curtain Road* the narrower lengths flow downwards over the broad slabs like water over an escarpment; in *Hot Dog Flats* the movement is horizontal and the broad panels stand up like the walls of a canyon or the hoardings beside a road; while in *Square Feet Flat*, raised high off the ground on its eponymous feet, supported by a single strut at the back and cut into a rising curve at the top, the whole can't help suggesting a flattened grand piano.



'Rhyming circles, contrasting diagonals, lines and expanses . . .' — a Caro bronze from 1978-9

The similes are too crude, since they pin down to a single effect what is shifting and expansive. From a distance or in photographs the sculptures may look still and contained, but once you engage them at close quarters they dissolve into a welter of impressions — outlines, surfaces, relationships, directional movements and counter-movements — which form less an image than a narrative. Yet the terms of the narrative are not easy to settle either. Standing under the high steel-mesh platform at one end of *Deep North* you are mainly conscious of its industrial associations, but the ploughshare-like section flaring away to the right and the dark green colouring of the whole piece introduce an agricultural and even landscape element. Then the two pillars supporting the platform become tree-like and the platform itself begins to suggest a canopy of foliage; only to revert, the moment you press the idea too far, to its original man-made rigidity and rectilinearity.

The small table- and floor-pieces are less amenable to this sort of free association, though, as Hilton points out, they have artistic antecedents in still-life painting, especially that of Cézanne and the Cubists, just as some of the larger pieces derive partly from Caro's admiration for Matisse. In the end it is easiest to enjoy the sculptures as direct visual experiences of space: rhyming circles, contrasting diagonals, lines and expanses, thicknesses and thinnesses, straight and dropping weights, leanings and lyings, staccato zig-zags and long, slow curves and spreads. Caro's mature work has never looked so authoritative and beguiling as it does at the Serpentine nor has the gallery itself ever looked more essential to the Arts Council's rôle as a patron of contemporary art. □

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THEATRE
Paul Allen

Turning the screw

Passion Play
PETER NICHOLS *Wyndhams Theatre*
Saturday Night at the Palace
PAUL SLABOLEPSZY *Old Vic*
Venice Preserv'd
THOMAS OTWAY *National Theatre*
Getting In
MIKE ENGLISH *King's Head, Islington*

'It was only a screw,' says a young woman in a play I shall get to later. Maybe Arab children who can't make sandcastles without getting covered in sticky black stuff feel the same about oil. The importance of sex increases in direct relation to its decline in availability, which is why the best plays about adultery always concern the fretfully middle-aged. They also usually concern the middle class, but that is more to do with the nature of British theatre than the nature of sex.

In **Passion Play**, which is perhaps the best adultery play of our time, the leading characters are certainly middle-aged, middle-class and at that delicate stage where sex outside marriage has the capacity of an earthquake to change the landscape beyond recognition.

What makes the play so good is that the hero knows the destructive nature of what he's doing, and can't stop. After 25 years of marriage, a successful man (art historian and picture restorer), still in love with his wife, he is approached by the young lover of a recently-dead friend. Her availability catches him at what old wives in their wisdom recognised as the dangerous age: his tragedy is that he regards life after fifty as 'the void', and like desperate, ageing Samsons everywhere he is prepared to pull the house down about his ears rather than go quietly.

When the RSC first produced the play three years ago most of the comment was about the way Peter Nichols uses two actors each for the central roles. At the very moment languid, comfy Leslie Phillips first lies to his wife about a lunch date, a more vigorous, curly-headed, greedy and subversive Barry Foster springs into view as his (to her) unheard thoughts. When the poised and lovely Judy Parfitt first discovers his affair, she is suddenly accompanied by a frightened, unconfident, slightly vengeful Zena Walker. It is much more than a clever way of expressing the gap between what we feel and what we say: at the end it is Judy Parfitt who leaves, and though the marriage may continue to exist, complete commitment has been withdrawn for ever.

Now that it has been revived in the West End many critics have concentrated on the clues given by the play's title (perhaps prompted by its opening in Holy Week). But, although it explores the fact that passion means suffering as well as appetite, I cannot make more than a sustained gag out of the religious or anti-religious counterpoint. *Passion Play* has its shortcomings — the young mistress is never more than a figure of middle-aged wishful thinking — but it raises the adultery play to high art because Peter Nichols, as so often from *Joe Egg* onwards, has written us over and beyond the threshold of pain while making a universal theme out of a private downward spiral of personal hurt. Mike Ockrent directs, Martin Johns designs: both, despite first night hiccups, excellently.

Sex is important enough to trigger the denouement of **Saturday Night at the Palace,** the latest and least enjoyable London import from the Market Theatre in Johannesburg. Its author, Paul Slabolepszy, shows a gift for sustained tension in this long (100 minutes) one-act play, but not for making us care about the outcome.

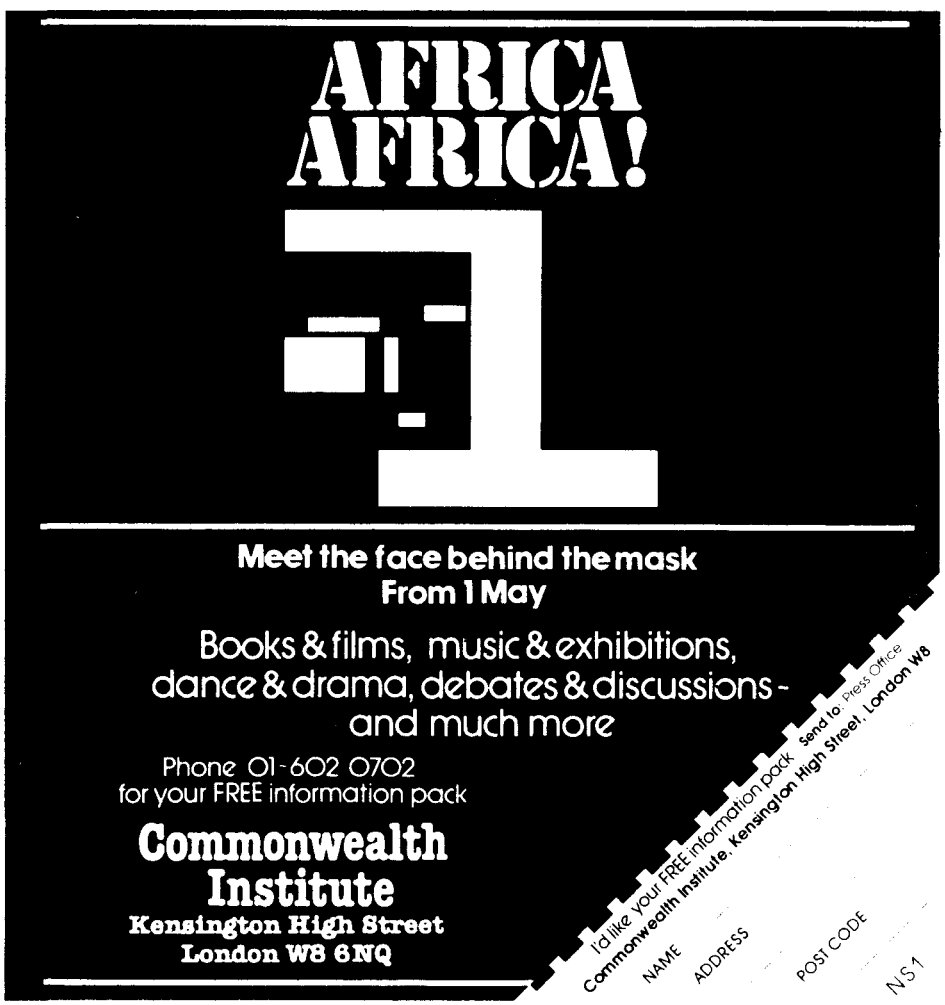
The play takes the form of a showdown between two friends outside an all-night burger bar in the middle of some South African nowhere. That the black who mans the joint maintains his dignity while horribly abused comes as no great surprise; but the real problem is that Vince (played by the author) is never likeable enough for an audience even to want to hear that he is the victim of his background, or whatever. This undermines some otherwise promising dramatic writing and a fine performance by Bill Flynn as his slobby friend.

Confession time: I left at the interval of **Venice Preserv'd.** In mitigation: Thomas Otway's tragedy of three people caught up with varying degrees of commitment and motive in a plot to destroy 17th-century Venice carried an oppressive echo of Corneille, studied for French A-level, which turned deadly at the moment Jane Lapotaire as the idealised wife Belvidera reached into the air above her left breast to clasp an imaginary dagger and plunge it in. Michael Pennington's Jaffier looked and sounded equally operatic. The Lyttelton is full of an Alison Chitty set in black, cracked baroque in which dark figures scurry like rats in a sewer, suddenly caught in a torch's beam: effective but demoralising.

But I did regret not seeing the rest of Ian McKellen's sharply intelligent Pierre, a highly contemporary and dangerous figure, the soldier who is the natural servant of the state but alienated and made subversive by the state's protection (under rules of 'privilege') of a politician with whom his own lover has slept for money.

Well, it was only a screw, as the Militant-supporting party activist says in Mike English's lunchtime play about a by-election, **Getting In.** I went to the King's Head partly because the King's Head is to lose its £55,000 from the Arts Council, money I am prepared to bet will not be re-invested in the same kind of enterprise in the regions.

Getting In isn't a very deep play, but assured writing and assured if sometimes over-emphatic direction by Maureen O'Brien take us on a quick tour of the compromises and tensions faced by a prospective Labour MP, especially a woman. You have the rest of this week only to see the play, and perhaps not very much longer to visit the King's Head. Islington, which is quite as provincial as, say, Leeds, will be poorer without it. □



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TELEVISION
Hugo Williams

Poetry and prose

ACTORS OF THE old school coming under the microscope of the cine-camera for the first time used to be told 'Don't just do something, sit there', to stop them going over the top during intimate sequences. Nowadays, a completely blank face on screen is what we call great acting. Paul Amato and Marianne Brandt in **Over Germany** (C4) were models of this tip-of-the-iceberg style, suggestive, like a Greek chorus, of momentous events going on elsewhere, in this case the past.

It is 1956 and a nine-year-old Scottish boy is visiting his Jewish granny in Hamburg, fully expecting Germany to be populated by comic-book SS officers and their bosomy blond accomplices. His granny's reticence about the reality of the war years only fuels his fantasies which come alive before our eyes: 'We meet again, swinehunt,' says a harmless neighbour. During a trip to a maritime museum the old lady tells the boy he looks like one of the figureheads, which is the image of Uncle Ernst, a funny deaf man who used to come to their house and shout, 'Uncle Ernst is here! Run and hide!' The boy asks her repeatedly to show him the house where his mother grew up but, though she sleeps on a photo of it, she cannot bear to go there and the boy is torn between curiosity and fidelity to his bomber pilot father.

Symbols of peace and war, a chocolate beetle and a cap pistol, lie on top of the wardrobe, waiting. He creeps up on the old lady with the gun and gives her a fright. 'I hate guns,' she says and throws it out of the window. She is cross, but she wakes him sweetly next morning with the happy birthday song and they go out and fly his new kite, the peaceful equivalent of his father's bomber. He is ungrateful and homesick and there is a wonderful wisdom in the way she coaxes him out of his room to drink his birthday champagne. 'Tomorrow I will show you my home,' she promises, but when they get near the house she still can't look and sends the boy on alone.

At this point I knew the hour was nearly up, but I was doubtful if Ian Sellar, whose brilliant first film this was, could possibly produce an ending which would wrap up all the available imagery. In the event, he managed it at a stroke. The boy creeps ahead and sees not the old house in the photo but some Scandinavian monstrosity, roof touching the ground on each side. Suddenly the battle lines are redrawn: now it is the ugly and dangerous changing world which is their mutual enemy and not each other. As if accepting his new-found family, the boy lifts his hands and shouts at the house: 'Uncle Ernst is here! Uncle Ernst is here! Run and hide!' The rightness of this still lifts the hair on my neck.

The film was made in an unusual way for TV: very little dialogue, a small number of long, still shots and above all no footling music or nostalgic voice-overs. Let's hope its author doesn't get rushed into not living up to this striking debut. Rather, let's see this one again first.

The tragic misunderstandings of childhood were the subject of another memorable film last week, also set in the Fifties. But, whereas Sellar resolved the confusion of the past into an acceptance of the present, Anne Devlin, in **A Woman Calling** (BBC-2), described the confusion of an old trauma but could suggest no more than her analyst-confessor character what might be the way out of it. This man, Broderick, takes his subject, Laura, back to a summer holiday seven years earlier when she visited a richer schoolfriend, Sheila. 'I wear lipstick now,' says Sheila. 'You can borrow my stockings.' One night they are telling ghost stories. Laura describes the sound of carriage-wheels on gravel and, as she speaks, there is the sound of a car outside. Voices are heard, then later a woman's sighs and finally a scream. Next morning the 16-year-old maid is found strangled and Laura is consumed with guilt at the idea that she has caused the arrival of the murderer through her telling of the story. The police get her to imitate the sighs she heard and she reproduces the sighs of copulation without (consciously) understanding what they are. The trauma is primed.

Seven years later, at Queen's University, Laura is involved in the revolutionary politics of 1968 and goes to bed for the first time with one of the student leaders. As she starts to breathe faster, she recognises the sounds preceding Morag's murder and her trauma surfaces with a vengeance. The sexual guilt of the present (this is Ireland, remember) re-awakens the guilt of the past and her lover's face changes before her eyes to that of her analyst who has deflowered her mentally by revealing to her the secrets of her subconcious.

This was an above average example of how Freud's ideas have been subsumed into the mystery, thriller and whodunnit formats, where they seem more at home somehow than in the busy psychopathic post-Freudian world where our subconscious has been permanently changed (deflowered) by our conscious knowledge (or boredom) of how it works. If the ending was less satisfactory than that of *Over Germany*, coming as it did out of the willed, adult world of abstractions and ideas, the world, finally, of words, rather than the mysterious, unlooked-for world of images, then that perhaps is the difference between prose and poetry. □

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Entertainment

MORNING STAR BENEFIT, Sun 29 April 7.15pm, at **Half Moon Theatre** 01-790 4000. May Day Cabaret with **Artery, Kondor Konki** and **Bill Monk,** plus bar. £3 waged, £1.50 unwaged.

SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE, EC1. 01-278 8916 (5 lines). CC group sales 01-930 6123 Until 5 May **The Hungarian State Puppet Theatre** — The Firebird/Classical Symphony/Petrushka and The Miraculous Mandarin eves 7.30, Mats 28 April & 5 May at 2.30 pm. The Miraculous Mandarin not performed at mats. 9-12 May **Jalabala Vaidya** in The **'Ramayana'** eves 7.30, 10 May mat 10.30am.

Poetry

OUTPOSTS POETRY QUARTERLY. Poems invited for future issues and 1984 Poetry Competition (prizes £1,000). For details send S.A.E. to 72 Burwood Road, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey KT12 4AL.

Bookshops

HOUSMANS BOOKSHOP SALE starts on Saturday, 28 April at 5 Caledonian Road, London N1 (just two minutes walk from Kings Cross station). Open from 10-5 on Saturday and 10-6 weekdays.

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FILMS
John Coleman

Boojum

And the Ship Sails On (PG)
Academy One
The Heartbreakers (15)
ICA; Classic, Oxford Street

A flickering sepia newsreel shows the activity on a Neapolitan quayside as a luxury liner prepares to depart in July 1914. Faces whip naughtily in and out of cranked camera range; grand passengers descend from vehicles silently; then a pit piano thrums a bit, the busy images modulate into black-and-white, a grey-haired gentleman waves his arms as the embarking *beau monde* breaks into operatic chorus and the screen is slowly infiltrated by colour. Nothing, perhaps, so becomes Fellini's **And the Ship Sails On** as the mock-nostalgic magic of its opening, with the *Gloria N.* leaving port laden with the urned ashes of the world's greatest soprano and an eccentrically mixed bag of old colleagues, admirers, rivals, a fat baby-visaged Grand Duke and his blind sister, all bound for the Adriatic island of the dead soprano's birth where her ashes will be scattered and a requiem sung.

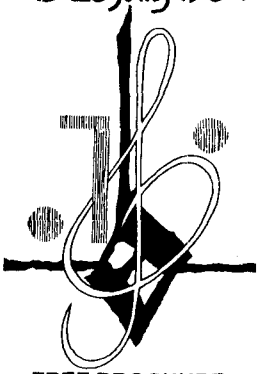
That the ship is also bound for the choppy waters of allegory, alas, is made abundantly clear from the outset by Freddie Jones's chirpy, rueful explanations and asides to us, the audience, in his guise as a bibulous society journalist, Orlando. (Shooting went on, apparently, in five languages; we have the mostly English version, dubbed in Rome by Michael Hodges.) What one might note is that this Orlando is, quite early on, allowed Fellinian doubts as to where the enterprise is headed. 'The voyage of life,' he mutters, glancing through his scribbles so far in his cabin; then, staring despairingly in our direction, 'Everything's been said . . . *and done*'. The italics are really his, or those of Fellini and his co-writer Tonino Guerra.

And so, when an invasion of Serbian boat people happens, vivid peasant refugees from the assassination of that Archduke Ferdinand which precipitated World War I, and they start stirring things up with their hungry vitality — pressing noses against windows as first-class folk dine, seducing by their animal honesty both the nympho wife (Norma West) of Peter Cellier's effete and kinky Sir Reginald Dongby and that sweet-faced maiden who has haunted Fellini dream-films since *La Dolce Vita* — ah, well, a regretful sigh escapes us. The maestro of cake and circuses is not nodding as woefully as in the appalling *Orchestra Rehearsal*, but this end-of-an-era, birth-of-another clash is pretty much shadow-play, profligate in aspiring resonances, impoverished in sustained and sustainable substance. The liner, in fact, barely sails on, over its Cinecittà ripples of silver foil. A studio Austro-Hungarian battleship challenges it; and there is a double-sinking, with what is already obvious made callowly so as the camera pulls back to roam around an acreage of technical trickery — a mechanism of tilted ship's deck, a forest of equipment and handlers, a glimpse of the edges of Fellini around a view-finder.

He has to get into the act. By now, this surely betokens an insecurity at once arrogant and ingratiating, a self-disservice. For Fellini, however perilously, retains an instinctive ability to create staggering and memorable cinema. He writes faces, such as that of the bleak old-movie phiz of Barbara Jefford as the threatened new diva or of Cellier as a smiley pervert, confidently on to celluloid as emblems of a past era; he brings off the home-movies of the deceased occasion for the voyage (spectral Janet Suzman) being run by her dubious 'curator' in a waterlogged shrine of a cabin; he superbly mounts an occasion where famed singers vie to echo their top notes down to an applauding, cacophonous stoke-hold, grimy boilermen enchanted. It would be halfway genial to think he knew what he was up to here, with us cast as the open-mouthed stokers below, fooled by his operatic bravura. Not so incidentally, there is also a stinking rhinoceros aboard, probably Fellini's ultimate in redolent red herrings, a squitty carapaced token of something reinforced and alien. 'Did you know,' says Freddie Jones, as he shares a lifeboat with the beast, 'that the rhinoceros gives excellent milk?' Frankly, I didn't, and this verbal curlicue ends a botched trip on a suitably Carrollian note. The Snark was a Boojum, you see.

PETER F. Bringmann's **The Heartbreakers** is a West German look-back in sentimentally tempered angst to the mid-Sixties struggles of some lads and a girl they reject to form a 'beat band' or rock-group. In its relaxed, disjointed fashion, it tells a credible enough tale of youth on the loose, neither thugs nor angels, undergoing brushes with authority and pangs of authentic feeling as they squabble towards taking a prize in a free-for-all contest in the Essen concert-hall of the beginning, where their 14-year-old 'manager' has just missed the Rolling Stones. These neatly-differentiated four or five gather moss, a sort of tamed and amiable outcrop of various verdures, while 'growing up' under the blight of pop. As Lisa, the hard-done-by girl, Mary Ketikidou flaunts finely. Sascha Disselkamp, a composite Jagger-Bowie figure, looks right as the narcissistic group-leader. A mild walk on the super-annuated wild side. □

City of London Festival
15-28 July 1984



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Exhibitions

CEOLFRITH GALLERY, SUNDERLAND ARTS CENTRE, 17 GRANGE TCE, STOCKTON ROAD, SUNDERLAND, TYNE & WEAR. TEL. (0783) 41214. 24 April-19 May — 'OUT OF PRINT' and 'FIRE & SMOKE' Contemporary Raku Ceramics. 11 & 12 May — Raku Workshops. 5 & 12 May — Screenprint Workshops for Kids. Contact Arts Centre for details. Open Tues-Fri 10am-6pm, Sat 10am-4pm.

GEORGE ORWELL 1903-1950. Selected manuscripts/memorabilia on display for the first time 2 May-8 June 10am-5pm weekdays at Flaxman Gallery, University College, entrance from Malet Place, London WC1.

Jazz

HALF MOON THEATRE, 213 Mile End Road, E1. **Nearly Normal Music** presents: Mon 30 April THE ANNIE WHITEHEAD BAND; Tues 1 May THE GUEST STARS; Wed 2 May DREAMTIME; Thurs 3 May THE JOHN BENNETT BAND; Fri 4 May HI-JINX. Each night 8pm, £1.50 waged, £1 unwaged. All five nights £5.

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FIRST PERSON

Alison Hennegan

Raid on the articulate

A GOOD BOOKSHOP is always so much more than just a place where books are sold. That's particularly true of Gay's The Word, the only gay community bookshop in England or Wales.

On 10 April it and the homes of three of its directors were invaded in a series of Customs and Excise raids which incorporated both the farcical — they almost 'detained' a sack of (used) cat litter — and the far from funny: those questioned were, for a number of hours, refused permission to telephone solicitors although Customs now deny it. Some possessions removed from private houses lay outside Customs' jurisdiction.

Over 800 volumes, some 500 titles, were removed. Technically their defining characteristic was that they were all US imports. Presumably Customs hope they will also prove to be 'indecent' (a notoriously shifting quality: one and the same book can be found both innocent and guilty of it on the same day at different hearings).

Among those potentially 'indecent' works were a number which appear on Required Reading lists for British undergraduates taking courses in Literature, Film, Politics, Sociology and Women's Studies. Many of the books are distributed here by British wholesalers and are freely available in mainstream shops.

Not only a distressing raid but also, it seems, an incompetent one. But then it's difficult to judge Customs' competency without first knowing what they intended to achieve.

For many gay and lesbian Londoners, Gay's The Word is not so much a bookshop as a way of life. To visitors from further afield, its shelves provide an oasis of gay thought and self-expression amid the arid wastes of unremittingly heterosexual publications. (Even those who can never get to London still use the shop, via its mail order services and regular newsletter.) Small wonder if visitors, catching their first sight of several thousand volumes housed in a shop whose very existence is one of the gay community's most cherished achievements, rub their eyes and wonder if their oasis is a mirage.

But it's real enough. Here, in poetry and prose, fiction and theory, words and pictures, the present is explored, the future envisioned, the past reclaimed. Biographers make sense at last of all those supposedly 'sexless' gay dead. Social historians unearth precious information about our predecessors in earlier centuries and give us the warming knowledge that we are a continuation, not a temporary 20th-century anomaly. Pamphlets and periodicals from all over the world remind any of us in danger of forgetting that this shop, its customers and the community it serves are part of an international movement.

So many gay groups have held their inaugural meeting in this room. Festivals, new publications and campaigns have been planned here. New authors have given their first public readings, established ones have launched their latest books here. Truly, a community bookshop.

For the real defining characteristic of the 'detained' books is not their American origin or their as yet to be defined 'decency'. What links them all is how and why they have come to exist. Those who wrote the books share with those who sell and those who buy them a common experience. Until very recently all homosexual women and men have had to fight every inch of the way for accurate information about who we were and what we might become. We picked our way through a morass of hostilely written, ill informed, deeply harmful books which told us we were mad, maladjusted, a social menace, hormonally imbalanced, eternally damned, emotionally retarded, genetically damaged and a permanently doomed psycho-sexual mess.

Growing up and coming out was a process of first recognising, then rejecting other people's lies about us. We fought a lot of that battle in isolation, not knowing others were fighting it too. Later, through the gay liberation and women's movements, many of us found each other. Some of us began to write the books which now fill Gay's The Word. Thousands of us were hungry to read them.

In novels and manifestos, cartoons and polemic, utopian theory and sober history, the same themes emerged again and again, strong, insistent. Connections were traced: between the oppression of gay men and that of women; between the scapegoating of sexual minorities and the wider manipulation of society; between rigidly defined gender roles and a series of systems essentially unjust to women. True indecencies were identified. The systematic sexual censorship, suppression and distortion practised by innumerable states — Right and Left, East and West, past and present — were recorded, analysed and condemned.

This dizzying proliferation of published works has sprung from one overriding need: a hunger for truth after so many lies; and a determination that having once found the truth, we would never again lose it to those with a vested interest in suppressing it or controlling access to it.

Rhetoric? Certainly. But we began to create the organisations and institutions which made our rhetoric reality. Just over a year ago gays and lesbians in Britain had three major resources: *Gay News*, London's Gay Switchboard and Gay's The Word. I'm writing this piece on 16 April, the first anniversary of the death of *Gay News*. Mercifully, Switchboard, the world's only 24-hour-a-day gay information line, thrives.

Gay's The Word, which has just 'lost' one third of its stock and faces legal charges, is fighting for its life. Not such an incompetent raid after all, perhaps? □

Donations towards Gay's The Word's legal costs may be sent to: Defend GTW Campaign, c/o Capital Gay, 38 Mount Pleasant, London WC1. Further information is available from the shop, (01) 278 7654.

WEEKEND COMPETITION

No 2819 Set by Maud Gracechurch

The Prime Minister has to report regularly to the Queen. Extracts, please, from recent conversations between Mrs T. and H.M. Up to 120 words by 11 May.

No 2816 Set by E.O. Parrott

Plans for meetings of fan clubs of unlikely fictional characters.

Report by Di Dact

Ten pounds for each entry printed. There were others among you who tried just as hard but space is short this week, and who ever said that life would be fair anyway?

For those of 'very little brain', the hotel offers an evening of almost infinite regression in the comforting company of fellow-Pooh people. The proceedings begin with a leisurely stroll through the extensive grounds, during which guests can toss twigs into little streams, chat inconsequentially or simply empty their minds of all residual traces of responsible adulthood.

After a soothing tea of bread and butter with lashings of honey, guests will spend a deliciously boring hour pressing their noses against window-panes, before being whisked off by our fully-trained nannies to be scrubbed down with carbolic soap and abrasive face-flannels. A brief game of I-spy or Hunt the Thimble may be permitted before the obligatory cup of warm milk signals bed-time (7.30 sharp). PETER NORMAN

Friends of Mr Woodhouse

1) The meeting must take place not very far away at a time of year when travelling will be least unpleasant.
2) The hall must be kept very warm, but not too warm, and the windows kept closed to avoid any danger from draughts.
3) The collation offered should consist of a nice, smooth gruel, thin, but not too thin, followed by eggs boiled very soft.
4) The meeting should end in good time, 'the sooner the better'. JOHN STANLEY

ANNUAL BILLY BUNTER MIDNIGHT DORM FEAST at St Wulfrith's School, Petersfield, Hants — 11.30pm for midnight. Eat your way through cold chicken, cold ham, cold tongue, pork pies, sausages, two kinds of plum cake, tinned salmon, sardines, jam tarts, doughnuts, chocs, bulls-eyes, toffees, bacon and eggs, etc., before sitting down to a five-course turkey dinner, after which the boys of St Wulfrith's will give an exhibition of De-bagging. Admission by five-shilling postal order. During the evening the annual Bunter Award will be presented to the member who has managed to obtain the largest amount of unsecured loan. C. FEVER

THE DRACULA FAN CLUB celebrates the Count's birthday, 22 December, night of his earthly death, when he rose at midnight to sup the blood of his first lucky victim. It is regretted that the real thing will not be drunk this year, owing to an outbreak of AIDS last time, but the substitute will resemble genuine human blood in every way.

Fans will take their turn at the soft neck of a splendidly luscious servant girl, custom-made by a Japanese firm specialising in life-size lasses. There will be the usual buffet of fried bats' wings tastefully served in plastic skulls to the accompaniment of Kate Bush hissing in person.

Mr Norman Tebbit will officiate. T. GRIFFITHS

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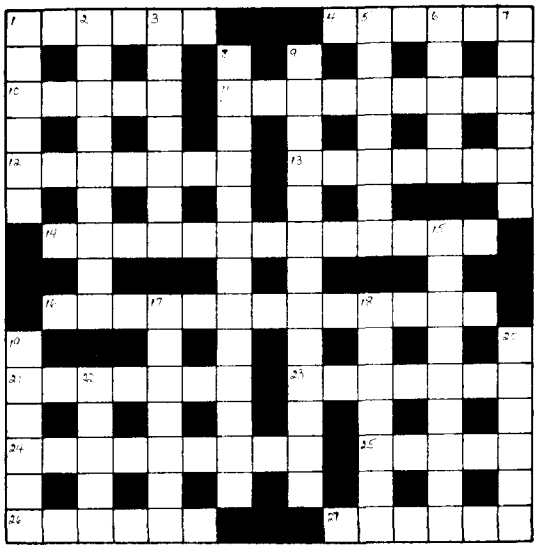
Weekend Crossword 1438

PRIZES: £5 Book Tokens for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1438, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, by first post 8 May.



Name_____

Address_____

ACROSS

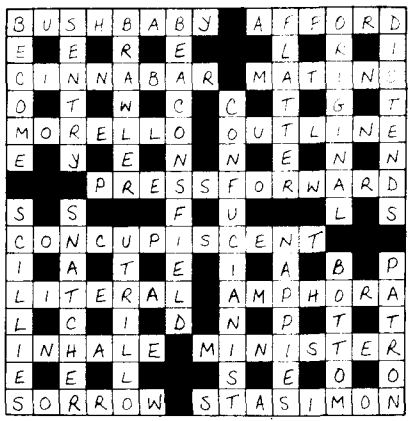
1 Wrinkle which sounds genuine (6)
4 The king keeps this flower behind him in a room (6)
10 Triumphs for birds (5)
11 Promotion in the order when long involved with 22 (9)
12 People in the east permit one of four (7)
13 Bookek needed here and now (7)
14 Star on a vehicle holding equal potential as a leading light of the festivities (8,5)
16 Confiscation makes one seek an allocation on points (13)
21 Woman who has to be caught in a different race (7)
23 The most profound nuisance on a river (7)
24 State which only has one main street (9)
25 Prayer organised in a part of the Bible (5)
26 Pointed remark about an inn being rebuilt for providing food (6)
27 Shrouds part of the field (6)

DOWN

1 Appropriate friend for Pip (6)
2 Duff consumed to provide helping? (9)
3 He worked on night and day (7)
5 Without grassland in it the picture would be banned (7)
6 Cry which sounds like something to eat (5)
7 Bunter's classmate does keep some information in his head (6)
8 When it is time to celebrate, a child appears after a charge around town (7,6)
9 Unofficial fighting which may give a clan due reward (10,3)
15 Pardon for putting an animal into a river (9)
17 Disgusting article on a relative (7)
18 Two games for an artist (7)
19 It is half up to advertising for it to be brought into action (6)
20 Sets out for America (6)
22 Here one is included by Tony (5)

SETSQUARE

Solution to 1436



Prizewinners to 1436

Georgina Jones (Luton)
A. Milewski (Market Drayton)
Janet Thomson (Montrose)

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BOOKS/ PUBLICATIONS

'A Cry For Health — Poverty and Disability in the Third World' Ed. Oliver Shirley. 1983. Foreword by Jonathan Dimbleby. Chapters by fifteen international experts. Sections on Preventing Disability, Health Resources, Rehabilitation, The International Perspective. Bibliography. 96 pages, illustrated. £2.50 (UK post paid) from: Third World Group (E), 16 Bath Street, Frome, Somerset BA11 1DN.

REVIEW COPIES and other books in fine condition bought and sold by Vermilion Books, 57 Red Lion St, London WC1. Tel: 01-242 5822.

GROUPS/ MEETINGS

THEOSOPHY: S.A.E. for free pamphlets, book list, Programme of activities. Sunday 29 April 8 pm. Informal Q/A Meeting. 'The Bhagavad-Gita as Yoga'. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AL.

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON: The Cassal Lecture 1984 entitled: 'Marcel Proust and Melanie Klein: The Pleasure of Intelligence' will be given by Professor Leo Bersani, BA, MA, PhD (Harvard University), Professor of French and Head of the Department of French in the University of California, Berkeley, on Thursday, 10 May 1984 in the Lecture Theatre, Third Basement, Strand Building (3B20) at King's College London, Strand, London WC2R 2LS at 5.30 p.m. Admission free, without ticket.

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Write to the Director, Fundraising and Publicity, LEPRA, Suite 54, Manfield House, 376 Strand, London WC2R 0LR, giving details of your career to date, including fundraising activities (describing each event, its frequency, and the amount raised by it). *Please include a large SAE for an application form and details of LEPRA's work.* We will let you know by the second week of May if you have been shortlisted.

FRONT BENCH Labour MP requires Personal Secretary/ Shorthand Typist, 3 days a week. Box 8128.

MANAGING EDITOR

'Searchlight' Britain's only Anti-Fascist and Anti-Racist monthly is seeking a Managing Editor. The job calls for a mature person with management skills and a journalistic background. A knowledge of Far Right Politics, Racism and Fascism is essential.

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- *organising and promoting schools, conferences, seminars and visits in the UK and overseas*
- *conducting general correspondence and office administration.*

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For further details write to Ian Martin, General Secretary, Fabian Society, 11 Dartmouth Street, London SW1H 9BN. Tel. 01-222 8877.

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Key Roles in Nuclear Policy Development

The Council is setting up a small specialist unit to undertake new policy development work on nuclear matters in close co-operation with the Chair of Public Services and Fire Brigade Committee and Members, the unit will comprise the following staff:—

Specialist Policy Researchers

- Civil Defence & Emergency Planning. Ref: 323.
- Nuclear Free Zones, Transportation of Irradiated Fuel & Grants to Peace Groups. Ref: 324.

There are two posts, each specialising in assisting in the development of the Council's policy initiatives in one of the above areas. Responsibilities include advising on and promoting the Council's nuclear policies both within the Council and in London. Liaising with other public authorities and voluntary groups; providing a central information resource for GLC departments and Members and outside organisations; monitoring press and publications; dealing with policy-related enquiries from the public; participating in the Greater London War Risk Study; and generally promoting public awareness of the consequences of nuclear proliferation and expansion.

Applicants should have the capacity to acquire quickly a broad knowledge of both the current nuclear situation and the relevant Council, central government and NATO policies and also the Civil Defence Law and the Council's statutory obligations in this and the emergency planning areas. This should be backed by proven research, drafting, communication and organisational skills, and experience of coping with a heavy, pressurised workload.

Salary: £12,444 — £14,076 inclusive.

Administrative Assistant

In addition to providing essential administrative support to the two Policy Researchers, this post is also responsible for the day-to-day running of the Unit.

Duties include arranging and attending meetings; drafting committee reports and correspondence; dealing with enquiries from the public and interested organisations; and gathering information. The ability to work unsupervised under pressure is essential together with good organisational, drafting and interpersonal skills.

Salary: £6,519 — £8,817 inclusive. Ref: 322.

For an application form, to be returned by 11th May 1984, write to: Director-General's Department, Greater London Council, Room 203, The County Hall, SE1 7PB or telephone 01-633 1527. Please quote appropriate reference.

These posts are suitable for job sharing.

The GLC welcomes applicants from all sections of the community, irrespective of their sex, ethnic origin, colour, sexual orientation or disability, if they have the necessary attributes to do the job.

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PROJECT ORGANISER

required by the **Alternative Employment Study Group**, which has been recently established to investigate and make proposals for alternative employment in the West of Scotland to that currently provided by the defence industry and military establishments.

The project is supported by a wide range of organisations, including trade unions, peace groups, church groups, local authorities, and community groups.

The Project Organiser will be based in Dumbarton, and will be responsible for developing the work of the project, liasing with local organisations, fund-raising to ensure the project's continuation, and organising a wide range of conferences and meetings.

The initial contract will be for one year, with the possibility of renewal thereafter. Starting salary: **£7,404.**

Further details and application forms can be obtained from: **AESG, 29 Nicolson Square, Edinburgh EH8 9BX.** Completed applications must be returned **by 12 May.** Please quote reference: NS

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Campaign Worker

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For further information telephone Alan Woods, on Ext. 2279.

Application form from Chief Executive, London Borough of Greenwich, Peggy Middleton House, 50 Woolwich New Road, Woolwich, London SE18 6HQ. Tel: 01-854 8888 Ext. 2034.

Closing date: 11 May, 1984.

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LISTINGS

FRI 27 APRIL

RHONDDA May Day Lecture by Hywel Francis on Arthur Horner. 7.30pm Park & Dare Hall Treorchy, Long Llafur/NUM Maerdy Lodge. **Details: Neil Evans 0766 780767.**

LONDON 'Release Nelson Mandela and all political prisoners in South African gaols'. Picket 5.30-7.30pm every Fri. South Africa House, Trafalgar Sq.

SAT 28 APRIL

TWICKENHAM 'Stop the Tour in '84' Demo. Assemble 12.30pm Twickenham BR station. **Details: Anti-Apartheid Movement, 13 Selous St, NW1 ODW 01-387 7966.**

LONDON 'Women challenging Racism' conf. 9.30am-6pm The Factory, Chippenham Mews, W9. 8pm Theatre of Black Women present 'Silhouette'. Creche, wheelchair access, food. All women welcome. **Details: GLC Anti Racist Year Women's Working Group 01-960 7939/633 1115.**

CARDIFF 'Fighting the Euro-elections' Conf. 10.45am-3.40pm Mid-Glamorgan County Hall. Spkrs Wales Labour Co-ordinating Cttee/S. Wales Labour Euro candidates. Adm. free. **Details: Wayne David 0656 741142.**

SUN 29 APRIL

LONDON 'Carry Greenham Home' film show with spkrs in aid of London region CND. 1pm Phoenix Cinema, 52 High Rd, East Finchley N2. Adm. £2.50/£1.50 unwaged. **Details: 01-388 1628.**

TUES MAY 1

LONDON 'Useful Work, Useless Toil' free open day celebrating William Morris. 9am-9pm Clapham/Battersea Adult Education Inst. Edgeley Rd, SW4. Concert, discns, spkrs. **Details: Mrs. O. Janssen 01-622 2965.**

LONDON 'Red Rose Rally – Labour women and Europe' 7.30pm Friends Meeting House, Euston Rd, NW1. Spkrs incl Anne-Mari Lizin, Belgian MEP, Jo Richardson, MP, Harriet Harman MP. Entertainment by Maria Tolly. Bkstall, creche, food, disabled access/sound loop. Sponsored by Socialist Grp. of European Parliament/London Labour Party Women's Cttee.

LONDON 'How should we be governed? The threat to local democracy'. Spkrs Ken Livingstone, Rev Michael Taylor 4.30pm. 'Health-care in Guerilla-held zones of El Salvador' (Seminar) and 'Disillusionment to Hope: Vietnam USAF pilot to Quaker Doctor' Spkr Dr. Charles Clements (USA) 7.30pm 3 meetings at Westminster Cathedral Conf. Centre, Ashley Pl, Victoria St, SW1.

CAMDEN Celebrate May Day Cuban style – live music, 'Teatro Escambray', Afro-Latin disco, bar. 7.30pm Irish Centre, 52 Camden Sq, NW1. Adm. £2.50/£1 unwaged. **Org. Britain Cuba Resource Centre. Details: Peter West 01-743 4917. Org. Baptist Renewal Grp.**

THURS 3 MAY

CAMDEN 'Women and Public Transport' Conf. 1pm Camden Town Hall, (Judd St entrance). **Details: Campaign to improve London's transport 01-928 9179.**

LONDON 'Groups, Communication and Democracy' Lecturer: Dr. J. Poulter. 6-week course starts 7pm Working Men's College, Crowndale Rd, NW1. **Details: 01-387 2037.**

FRI 4 MAY

LONDON 'Management – the world's major problem' Lecturer: Dr. S. Hyman. 6-week course starts 7pm Working Men's College, Crowndale Rd, NW1. **Details: 01-387 2037.**

LONDON 'Remember Bobby Sands!' Meeting to commemorate Bobby Sands death 3 yrs ago. 7.30pm Camden Labour Club, Carol St, NW1. **Org. N. London Irish Solidarity Cttee, BM Box 1320, WC1N 3XX.**

LONDON 'The Paranormal and how to develop it'. Lecturer: Dr. A. Mavromatis. 6-week course starts 6.30pm Working Men's College, Crowndale Rd, NW1. **Details: 01-387 2037.**

SAT 5 MAY

LONDON 'Prisoners' Rights Conf.' 10am-5pm Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, WC1. Spkrs incl Stephen Sedley QC, Geoff Coggan PROP, Reps from 'Women in Prison', Jimmy Boyle. **Details & registration: NCCL 21 Tabard St, SE1. 01-403 3888.**

LOUGHBOROUGH March & Rally for Peace and Disarmament. Assemble 1.30pm Southfields Park. Spkrs, food, musis. **Org. Loughborough CND Loughborough 218150.**

WOOD GREEN 'Remember Bobby Sands and all the Hunger Strikers!' Open air rally 11am-4pm outside Library, High Rd, N22. **Called by London Irish Solidarity Cttees.**

BLAENAU FFESTINIOG Merioneth May Day Festival 1.30pm Park Sq. Meeting, films, exhibition 2.30pm Ysgol y Moelwyn school. Spkrs incl D.E. Thomas MP. **Details: Tony Heath, 72 High St, BF, N. Wales. 0766 830018.**

SUN 6 MAY

LONDON 'Remember Kassinga' 2 plays followed by discn. led by SWAPO, COSAWR. 7pm Africa Centre, 38 King St, WC2. **Details: Namibia Support Cttee, PO Box 16 London, NW5 2LW. 01-267 1941/2.**

LONDON Guyanese Workers May Day Rally 10.30am-1.30pm Ritzy Cinema, Brixton Oval, SW2. Spkrs incl 2 WPA Executive membs. Poetry by Mark Matthews, premiere of documentary film on Dr. Walter Rodney. Adm. £1. **Details: 01-673 3601.**

FORTHCOMING

8 MAY LONDON 'Poverty & the EEC Euro Election' Debate org. by UK Forum on Poverty in the EEC. All Party panel of MPs, MEPs, Low Pay Unit, CPAG, Age Concern. 11am Holy Apostle Church Hall, Cumberland St, SW1. **Details: 01-543 5684.**

11 MAY LONDON El Salvador Film Premieres, 'In the name of Democracy' – Life, death, elections. 'Americas in Transition' – US Intervention in Latin America. Spkrs. Jenny Pearce, Donald Anderson MP, FDR Rep. 7.30pm LSE Old Theatre, Houghton St, WC2. Adm. £1.50 £1 unwaged. **Org. El Salvador Solidarity Campaign.**

12 MAY LONDON (19 May Edinburgh) Delegate confs. dealing with 'Berufsverbot' and the attack on civil and political liberties in W. Germany & UK. **Details: Jack Tyrrell, 265 Jersey Rd, Osterley, Middx. TW7 4RF.**

12 MAY CAMDEN 'French Economic Policy under Mitterand' Spkr Peter Holmes. 2.30pm Camden Labour Club (upstairs rm.) 4 Carol St, NW1. **Org. International Fdn. Left Europe UK Grp.**

12 MAY BURFORD Levellers' Day afternoon History Workshop. **Details: Levellers' Workshop, Centre for Social History, Ruskin College, Oxford. 0865 56041.**

20-26 MAY LEICESTER Nuclear-Free Festival. **Details: 0533 549922 x 6022.**

26 MAY COVENTRY 'No Cruise! No Pershing! No SS20s!' March & Rally. Assemble 11.30am Edgwick Park, Foleshill Rd/Hearsall Common, Hearsall Lane/Stoke Green, Binley Rd. Spkrs at Memorial Park incl Joan Ruddock, EP Thompson, Ron Todd, Alan Bleasdale. Evening rock concert. **Details: W. Midlands CND 021 632 6909.**

27 MAY COVENTRY Conference on the Illegality of Nuclear Weapons. 10am St. Mary's Hall. Cost (incl lunch) £5/£2 unwaged. **Details: John Dewar, School of Law, University of Warwick, Coventry CV4 7AL. Coventry 24011 x 2119.**

27-29 JULY NOTTINGHAM Shelter Annual Housing Conference University of Nottingham. **Details: Tim Mars, Shelter, 157 Waterloo Rd, SE1 8FX. 01-633 9377.**

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LIVELY, ATTRACTIVE lady, medium build, 5'6", enjoys walking, theatre, travel, dancing, seeks lively, tall male, 50s, similiar interests for outings/ companionship. Genuine replies only. Box 8176.

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